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## LECTURES

ON

## OUR LORD'S MIRACLES.

BY

THE REV. JOHN CUMMING, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE SCOTCH NATIONAL CHURCH, AUTHOR OF APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES,  
LECTURES ON THE PARABLES, DANIEL, ETC. ETC.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
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1856.



## PREFACE.

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THESE Lectures were addressed by the writer to his flock in the ordinary course of his ministry, and were regarded by some of his hearers as sufficiently important to be preserved in a permanent shape. They were preached from notes, and accurately reported. They are therefore destitute of the exact polish resulting from elaborate writing; but perhaps they retain, in consequence, a freedom and simplicity that will render them more useful to the popular mind.

The Author is deeply indebted for many leading thoughts to OLSHAUSEN, the German commentator, and also, in some degree, to TRENCH, whose obligations to the same writer are very many and very great. A work very inferior to these may secure a reading, where a far weightier one is not welcome. Ships of small draught may sail up the tributary streams of the popular mind, where vessels of heavy tonnage cannot be admitted.

Originality is the attribute of few. To render all he reads and learns conducive to the good and edification of his flock, is the clear duty of every faithful minister. What was useful to a congregation may be useful to the church at large. It has been the design of the Author, in these Lectures, to set forth as fully

as possible the redemptive character of the miracles of our Lord; in other words, to show that they were not mere feats of power, or proofs of Divine beneficence, but installations of the future age —specimens on a smaller scale of what will be realized when the predictions of the two last chapters of the Apocalypse shall have become actualized in full and lasting fact. This great idea the Author hopes to bring out yet more fully in a companion volume on the Parables, as soon as he can find time to get it ready. Those who derive any good from these Lectures should give God the glory; and those who get none are requested to forgive the writer.

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# LECTURES.

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## LECTURE I.

### WATER MADE WINE.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.—JOHN ii. 1-11.

I HAVE undertaken this series of lectures, on the miracles wrought by our Lord. Each of these is full of instruction. I have selected the present, because it is the first, and not on any other ground, or because of any peculiar appropriateness in it.

I will preface each of my lectures by some introductory remarks on some branch of the evidence that may be adduced from the miracles. In my first I will give a brief

exposition of what is meant by a miracle, and notice how a miracle is defined and designated throughout the word of God.

There are three great expressions by which miracles are designated—the first, a “miracle,” or “wonder;” the second, a “sign;” and the third, a “power.” Very often our translation renders the same original word, *δύναμις*, in the plural—works, powers, miracles; but this is a rather loose way of translating it: each word is perfectly clear and well defined, wherever it is employed. The first epithet is that of “wonder.” This presents the miracle in one of its aspects, but in its weakest and poorest aspect, and implies simply the impression which the performance of a miracle may make upon the senses of him that sees it.

It merely implies that, by the act just witnessed, wonder, awe, amazement is created; all that it is designed in this character to do is to break the slumber of the senses, to disturb the continuity of apathy, and to rouse man to a perception of a presence greater and mightier than himself. Hence, the very first result of the performance of a miracle is, the arrest of the attention, the awakening of the thought of those that are present, and in the midst of whom the miracle is done.

✓ The second name given to a miracle is a higher and more expressive one—a “sign.” All signs are not miracles, but all miracles are signs. A sign means a substance. Wherever we say there is a sign, we imply that there is something that is signified. When, therefore, a miracle is performed, it is, in this light, a sign of the presence of God. As a wonder, it startles; as a sign, it teaches; the one strikes, the other speaks; and hence, a miracle is not only startling to the senses, but it is significant and instructive to the mind: in other words, it not only creates awe, amazement, arrest, but it conveys meaning and instruction, the

chiefest point of which is, that men may here trace the finger, the foot-prints, and the marks of Deity.

The third name by which a miracle is known in Scripture is, a “power.” The word is sometimes rendered “works,” sometimes “mighty works,” and sometimes it is rendered “powers ;” and it is so called because a miracle is the manifestation of power ; not necessarily of a *greater* power than is already manifested in creation, as I shall explain, but the manifestation of that power in a new formula, in an unexpected shape, in a way in which we have not seen it so manifested before, and which, therefore, is more completely fitted to arrest the mind.

Let me show you how these three names can be applied to the miracle which I have now read. First, I said a miracle is called a wonder. At the tenth verse of this chapter, we read of the sense of wonder in the mind of the chief person at the feast. “And he saith, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine ; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse : but thou hast kept the good wine until now.” “There is some mysterious change,” he says ; “this is a new phenomenon ; I am astonished, surprised ; something more than usual is here.” The “power” of the miracle was felt when that which was water blushed into wine, as the Lord looked upon it. The miracle was also a “sign,” for it was so full a manifestation of the glory of Jesus, that it is said, “His disciples believed on him.” You have thus the three characteristics of a miracle embodied in that, the account of which I have now read.

Now a miracle itself is not a mere action, or a mere operation of nature, and yet it need not imply any more power than is already put forth in creation. For instance, in casting a handful of wheat into the soil, and making it grow up till it produces two or three bushels, there is as

much power of God manifested as there is in making a few loaves grow into a few thousand. There is the same power exerted in making a seed cast into the soil grow up into many seeds, as there is in making one loaf grow into many loaves. The difference between what we call a natural thing and what God pronounces a miraculous thing, is not so much the extent of power that is manifested, as the manner of the manifestation of that power.) Thus we read in the Epistle to the Romans, that the invisible things of God "are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head." So that all creation, we are told, in its action, as clearly intimates and proves the power of God, as any miracle, strictly and properly so called, could prove it. But where is the difference, you ask, between a miracle and the natural laws, as they are called, or operations of nature? I answer, one difference arises from the new and strange formula, shape, mode, or manner in which that power is put forth. Another difference arises from the fact, that the miracle of the seed cast into the earth growing into many bushels, is a miracle occurring every year, and witnessed by every individual upon earth; but the miracle of one loaf being multiplied into ten, twelve, or twenty, is a thing that occurred only once, and was witnessed by a few; and to that few only, and by their testimony to others, is that miracle addressed. The water coming from the clouds, and descending from springs and rocks, proves abundantly the power of God. That the ocean should be a mighty cistern, that the sand and the rocks of the earth should constitute so many perfect filters, that the water should be constantly supplied through these for us to drink, that the steam which evaporates from the sea should shape itself into clouds, and meeting with cold currents of air, should become condensed, and fall in the

shape of prolific and fertilizing showers ; all this is an evidence of the power of God—as great evidence of that power as one could possibly have. But the water turned into wine is not, as I have said, the manifestation of a greater power, but it is the manifestation of the same power, relieving the monotony which has dulled the impressiveness of the former ; lifting, as it were, the vail behind which God works, enabling us to see, not dead laws which the philosopher owns, but a living hand put forth on the springs of nature, controlling, originating, and creating all. Thus, then, the water from the clouds, falling upon the soil, ascending the trunk of the vine, and ultimately issuing in grapes, and those grapes passing into wine, is one process, and in every stage of this process God's power is manifested ; but when God turns water into wine, all that he does differently is to shorten the process. The ordinary process is, that the water in the sea should rise into the cloud, then fall from the cloud in copious showers, give refreshment to the vine and fertility to the earth, develop itself in sap, in blossom, in grapes, in fermentation, in wine—this is the long process ; the short process is, the water turning into wine at Christ's word ; but it is equally Christ in both ; it is equally divine power in both ; only we have got so accustomed to the long process, that we say it is the natural thing, and are so little accustomed to the short process, that the senses are startled and the mind is awakened. The difference is here too—that in the one case we see a succession of continuous causes, and in the other we see the actor come forth himself, lay aside the machinery by which he has acted heretofore, and in one word say, “Let this water be wine ;” and, recognising its Creator and its God, it becomes so.

In the next place, a miracle is not, as some have tried to show, contrary to nature. Never accept this definition of

it, because, as I shall show you in subsequent lectures, Strauss, one of the most subtle and most able infidels of modern times, (but who, I rejoice to say, has been replied to by his own countrymen, Neander, Tholock, and many others whose genius and piety are unquestionable,) has laid hold of this, and tried to do great mischief by it. A miracle is not a thing against nature, but something above and beyond what we call nature. For instance, when we read of our Lord's healing the sick, and in other instances raising the dead, we hear it said this is contrary to nature. It is no such thing. We call it contrary to nature, because we think that sickness is natural. Sickness is not natural; it is an unnatural thing; it is a discord in a glorious harmony; it is a blot upon the fair creation; it is most unnatural; and was never meant originally to be. When we see our Lord raising the dead, we say it is unnatural; yet it is not so, because death is the unnatural thing, and the natural thing is putting an end to death, and bringing back everlasting and glorious life. Thus, then, the healing of the sick and the quickening of the dead are not contrary to nature, but the perfection of nature; it is the bringing back of nature to her pristine state; it is restoring the primeval harmony; it is the evidence of ancient happiness, and the augury of future; it is the demonstration to us that all the prophecies that describe the glorious paradise that is to be are possibilities: and hence, every miracle of our Lord was a flower snatched from the paradise that is to be, a tone of the everlasting jubilee sounding in the depths of the human heart; a specimen of that new *Genesis*, under which there shall be no more sickness, nor sorrow, nor trial, but wherein former things shall have passed away, and all things shall be made new. Therefore a miracle is not contrary to nature, but it is the expansion, the perfection, the ennobling of nature: it brings nature back

to what it was. And teaches us what I think I ought to impress, that we ought never to be satisfied with this world, as if it were what it was meant to be: it is all out of course; and it always seems to me, therefore, that the physician is carrying forward, as it were, the work that Christ does perfectly; that he is here as a testimony to us, that the great Physician will one day do perfectly what his earthly agent does imperfectly. And so with every other curative process that goes on; it is an augury and foretaste of the perfection that will be; it is a testimony that nature has gone wrong, and an earnest that nature will yet be put right by nature's Lord.

But besides all this, a miracle is something more; it is an addition of a new and a nobler law to the law that previously was; it is not the destruction of any existing law, but it is superadding to that law a more perfect and glorious one. Thus, when I raise my arm, the power of gravitation ought to make that arm instantly fall; but when I keep that arm up, it is not by the destruction of the law of gravitation, but it is the superadding of a higher law, the great law of life. So, we can conceive that when Christ does a miracle, it is not the extinction of that which is really a right law, but it is the bringing from heaven a nobler law, to be superadded to, and render more glorious, the law that is. I will not dwell longer upon this subject at present, but reserve a portion of my remarks upon it for next lecture. I proceed, therefore, at present to unfold the illustration and the instance of what I have said in that beautiful miracle, the first that Jesus performed, in Cana of Galilee.

Before I enter upon this miracle clause by clause, let me notice how graciously Christ begins his career of miracles and mercies. The day begins, not with a burst of meridian splendour, but its dawn peeps from behind the

hills, tinges the sea with its beautiful and rosy colours, and then shines more and more “unto the perfect day.” So rose softly, beautifully, and progressively the Sun of righteousness. His first miracle was not a miracle of tremendous power, but one of quiet and gentle beneficence. The Saviour’s first miracle dawned in the form of a nuptial benediction upon a young couple, beginning the journey, and about to attempt the battle of life. He heightened domestic joys before he went forth to mitigate domestic sorrows. He began rejoicing with them that do rejoice before he went on his pilgrimage to “weep with them that weep.” Jesus sympathized first with the happy before he went forth to succour the miserable and the unhappy. And who was it that so sympathized? Who was it that had a heart thus opened to the softest and most responsive sympathies? He on whose soul there pressed the load of a world’s transgressions. He who saw a long and rugged road before him, and at the end of that road the cross to which he should be nailed. He whose spirit was thus heavy with the prospect of coming agony, could yet pause in that rough road, and step aside to that little cottage in that sequestered hamlet, to show that while he could expiate a world’s sins, he would recognise the remains of Eden happiness and Eden bliss even in the humblest and poorest of mankind. And it is at such a time, let me add, such a time of happiness and joy, as that which is described at the marriage-feast of Cana, that we need the presence of our Lord. Hence I must correct a very common misapprehension. When we are placed in affliction, or trial, when we have lost the near and the dear, or when our property has been swept away, at such a time we are very willing to say, “This is God’s doing;” but is it not strange, when joyful things come, and bounding hearts testify that they have come, when prosperity sheds its splendours

upon us, and hope draws us forward to scenes of increasing happiness, that we then think “this is our own doing?” If we are in affliction, we begin to pray—I speak of Christians; but strange that in prosperity we should never think of beginning to praise. Does it not indicate the original sin of our hearts, that we associate God and wrath together, instead of associating God with every thing that is beautiful and holy, beneficent and bright? We come to think Christianity is a capital thing for burials, but that it will do bridals no good at all; we come to suppose that the gospel is most appropriate when we weep, but that it is not fit to be put in the same category with rejoicing. My dear friends, you mistake it; it sweetens and sanctifies, not saddens, the happiest; and it sustains, and cheers, and strengthens the sorrowful and the suffering. It was more needed at the marriage-feast of Cana in Galilee than it was at the death-bed of Lazarus. It is as much needed to sweeten and to sanctify our joys as it is to mitigate and diminish our sufferings and our sorrows. Let us then ask the presence of a Saviour at sick-beds and funerals, but let us also ask the presence of a Saviour at marriages and at festivals: let us pray that he may be present when the cup is empty, or filled with gall; or when the cup is full and overflows, and the trembling hand can scarcely hold it steadily.

I notice in this parable, that our Lord came not to destroy society, but to descend into its depths, and sweeten, and cement, and sanctify it. He came not like the Goth to raze, or like the Socialist and the Communist to disorganize, but, like the Christianity of which he is the Alpha and the Omega, to illuminate, to inspire, and to sanctify. He did not come to build in the wilderness a huge convent for all Christians to withdraw from the world and dwell in, but he did better; he came to uphold, to

sanctify and sweeten human life, human joy, and human sorrow ; he came, not to put an end to common life, but he came to bring the gospel into its hidden recesses and its deepest depths, to make all its paths beautiful and its voices harmony. Christianity does not call upon you who are tradesmen to shut up your shops, but to be Christian shopmen ; it does not call upon you not to marry, but to marry in the Lord ; nor to lay aside your titles, as a recent denomination does, but to be Christian peers and peeresses ; it does not call upon you to detach yourselves from society, in order to avoid its evil, but to go into the midst of society, and meet its hostility, master its evils, and make it reflect the glory, the beneficence, and the goodness of God. Hence, the first act of the ministry of Jesus was not isolation from society, but going right into the heart of society, beginning at its root and centre, in order to bless, to beautify, and make it good.

We gather, too, from this parable, that our Lord (and this is perhaps one of the most remarkable proofs of his prescience, or, in other words, of his divinity) had, in many things that he said and did, an ulterior reference. Thus what he said about the Virgin Mary, as I will explain to you, had a clear ulterior, practical reference. So had also the fact that his first miracle was performed at a wedding. He knew that a section of his professing church would rise which would say that marriage is prohibited in some, and that celibacy is a holier, purer, and nobler state. All this is destroyed, neutralized, swept away, by the fact that the marriage instituted in Paradise has been reconsecrated in Cana of Galilee. I allege, therefore, that there is not a holier thing on earth than the domestic roof, and there is not a more divine nook of humanity than a Christian family.

Mary introduces the miracle which Jesus was about to

perform by the simple remark, “They have no wine.” We read that “there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine,” [or, literally translated, “when the wine began to fail,”] “the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.”

Perhaps I should explain that Cana of Galilee was a few miles north-east of Nazareth, a place that was most familiar to our Lord, and situated between Nazareth and the Lake or Sea of Gennesareth. It is described by a modern traveller (the site of it being perfectly well ascertained, and even its name retained) as a pretty Turkish village, gracefully situated on two sides of a hollow of fertile land, with surrounding hills, and covered with oaks and olive-trees. It is still a small village, but the mosque is there instead of the Christian temple.

Mary states then the fact which led to the performance of this miracle: “They have no wine.” Some have been anxious to ascertain why she said so. It has been suggested that the couple that were married were Mary’s own immediate relatives, and that she felt for their poverty. The Virgin Mary was a poor sinner by nature, and became a saint, not by the fact that she was the mother of the Lord’s humanity, but by the fact that she was a subject of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit of God. Mary had the pride of humanity, the vanity of a weak woman, and she thought and felt that poverty was a shame, and that wherever there was poverty, there, if possible, it should be hidden. And yet the holy gospel teaches us that poverty is beautiful, that the gospel came first to the poor; and certainly the Sun of righteousness, like the sun in the firmament, sends his beams into the casement of the poor man’s cottage as fully as into the oriel-window

of the great man's hall. Mary fancied poverty was a shame, and she says to the Saviour, "They have no wine." Perhaps, too, she meant by that, "We had better not stop; the wine they have is so little, it will not serve the company that are already come, and perhaps we had better retire, and not draw upon that which is already altogether insufficient." At all events, it is plain that it was a sense of poverty that caused Mary to make the remark.

Notice our Lord's reply: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" The Roman Catholic Church has exhausted all its ingenuity and talent, and has written much, in order to show that this does not mean what it means. And many other divines have imitated the Roman Catholic Church in this respect with other parts of the Bible. It is plain that in the answer of our Lord there was no disrespect. The word "woman," in fact, in ancient Greek, *γυναι*, is equivalent to "lady." To prove this, you have only to read the words used on the cross, "Woman, behold thy son;" an expression of respect mingled with affection. The words "what have I to do with thee?" seem to us Protestants, when we read our Protestant Bibles, to denote that Jesus had required no partnership in his sufferings, and could have no partnership in the expressions of his mighty power. But the Roman Catholic Church has translated it, "Woman, what is to thee, and to me?" which is utterly unintelligible; it conveys no meaning at all. The Greek words are, *τι εσύνι καὶ σοι*, (what to me, and to thee)? and every one who knows the elements of the Greek grammar, knows that this is an idiom, that, like all other idioms, it has its peculiar signification, and that literally translated into our tongue, it means, "What have I to do with thee?" or, "What hast thou to do with me?" Among other passages in which the same words occur, I may name Judges xi. 12; 1 Kings xvii. 18; 2 Kings ix. 18; Mark

v. 7. I might enumerate ten different parts of the Bible, speaking of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, in which the words  $\tau\acute{\iota} \epsilon\mu\omega\lambda$   $\tau\acute{\iota} \sigma\omega\lambda$  occur—five times in the singular, and in the plural five times more. I have looked at every one of these instances in the Roman Catholic Bible, and I find that nine times the words are translated exactly as we translate them, but in the tenth instance (John ii. 4) they are rendered, “What is to thee, and to me?” Certainly this looks suspicious—that the Roman Catholic Church should pursue the same interpretation which we adopt in nine cases, and only in the tenth should deviate, and assume a new and strange translation. Can we be called uncharitable, if we suspect that she felt that, as she would not bring her worship up to the height of God’s word, she would dare, in her awful blindness, to bring down God’s word to the level of her worship.

It is plain to us, then, that our Lord here taught a very great lesson—that Mary had no partnership in his glory, nor might have any share in his extraordinary sorrow; that even the tears of a weeping mother might not mingle with the shed blood of a dying and atoning Son; that he must tread the wine-press alone, and that not even a mother must be with him to participate in his agony, or to lay claim to a single gleam of that glory which exclusively belongs to him. Does not this seem prophetic? Does it not seem to imply that some portion of his church would rise in which Ave Marias should supersede the more glorious ascription, “Abba, Father,” and the intercession of a glorified saint should be made to take the place of the intercession of the glorious and the almighty Son? I will give you a remarkable instance of this. The present Pope of Rome has issued, on the subject of the immaculate conception, an encyclical letter from Gaeta, where he was

lately a prisoner and an exile. To show how true is the Apocalyptic description, "They repented not of their sins and their blasphemies," I will read what the present pope has written, and what was read in the course of 1849 in every Roman Catholic church throughout the world. "We also," says Pope Pius IX., "repose all confidence in this—that the blessed Virgin, who has been raised by the greatness of her merits above the choirs of angels up to the throne of God, and has crushed, under the foot of her Son, (the head of the old serpent,) and who, placed between Christ and the church, full of grace and sweetness, has ever rescued the Christian people from the greatest calamity, from the snares and attacks of all her enemies, taking pity on us with that immense tenderness which is the habitual outpouring of her maternal heart, to drive away from us, by her instant and all-powerful protection before God, the sad and lamentable misfortunes, the cruel anguish, the pains and anxieties which we suffer, and turn aside the scourges of Divine wrath which afflict us by reason of our sins, to oppose and divert the frightful streams of evil with which the church is assailed on all sides." The pope continues to say, "You know perfectly well, venerable brethren," addressing the archbishops, bishops, and prelates of the Romish Church throughout the world, "that the foundation of our confidence is in the most holy Virgin, since it is in her that God has placed the plenitude of all good, in such sort, that if there be in us any hope, if there be any spiritual health, we know that it is from her we receive it, because such is the will of Him who willed that we should have all by the instrumentality of the Virgin Mary." Such are the deliberate sentiments of Pope Pius IX., literally translated from the Latin, which I have now before me.

I have said then that this clause, "What have I to do

with thee?" is prophetic; and certainly it is so. But our Lord gives a reason for what he said, and adds, "mine hour is not yet come." I do not think that the expression "hour" here is used in that solemn sense in which it is used in another portion of the gospel, where our Lord exclaims, "Father, the hour is come." The word may be rendered fairly and justly "opportunity;" and all that our Lord seems to me to teach by the expression is simply this: "The moment for me to perform the miracle is not yet arrived; the wine only begins to fail, I will wait till it is exhausted; if some of the wine remain in the vessels, the impression I desire to produce by the miracle may be dissipated; they might say it was the wine that was left, and not wine instantly created by my mighty power; therefore, Mary, wait; you do not know, you must not interfere; I know the moment when it will be most for the good of the creature, and most for the glory of me."

It is said, "And there were set six water-pots of stone," or, as it might be translated, "water-jars of stone." I cannot but notice here a hidden feature that shows the perfect reality of the story. When a story is concocted, you may detect points in it which will show that it is a fiction, that it does not cohere. Now these water-pots of stone were large jars which were brought in to every festival, and the guests drew water out of them for the washing of their hands before they sat down to their meal. The order was given, "Fill the water-pots with water;" and this shows that the guests must have washed their hands, and that the water was nearly drawn out of the vessels; they were quite full at the beginning, and it must have been toward the close of the festival that our Lord wrought the miracle, and replenished the jars with wine. It was said at the beginning that the wine began to fail at the close of the feast, and it is shown by the water being

exhausted from the water-pots that it was so. We have evidence in all this of consistency, an under current of coherency, that demonstrates it was not a fiction, but an actual transaction—a fact. To indicate still more the force of the miracle, I may mention, that if our Lord had created the wine in the wine-bottles that had been exhausted, they would have said, “It is not new wine, but it is the old wine, which escaped our observation.” Or if he had told them to pour water into the vessels that had been emptied of wine, and had then changed it, the guests would have said, “It is only water flavoured by the remains of the wine that was in the vessels previously.” But here were the servants who took the water-jars, and poured water into them, and knew that it was water; in fact, that the vessels were not used for holding wine at all, and therefore there could be no deception. It is added, too, in a subsequent part of the miracle, that the servants who drew the water knew whence it came; they poured it into the jars, they saw that it was water, and that nothing but water was there. Thus, there was such a preparation as must have incontestably demonstrated the reality of the miracle performed. If our Lord had told them to bring jars from a distance, and place them there, it might have been said that it was by some sleight of hand, or by some preconcerted arrangement; but the jars were there as was usual at every Jewish festival, and he bade the servants fill them with water, that there might be no possibility of mistake; he then spake the word, and the water was turned into wine.

Let me notice the remark of the governor of the feast. “When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every

man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." Many Christians have been perplexed by the expression "when men have well drunk," as if it meant drinking to excess at a festival consecrated by the Saviour's presence. It really means no such thing. It does not describe what took place at the festival; the governor of the feast does not speak of the company over which he presided, but he describes what is the common practice at the common festivals of worldly men, where they present the best wine first, and after the taste has been blunted by drinking a sufficient quantity of it, the inferior wine is introduced, and from their blunted taste they are unable to appreciate the difference. The governor of the feast makes the remark, not the Saviour; and he does not describe what took place under his eyes, but what usually and notoriously took place among others; therefore there need be no misapprehension of the morality of the miracle, as if it implied that our Lord sanctioned by his presence (which he did not, and which no remark made by any one concerned in the miracle can in the least indicate) drinking to excess.

But it has been objected by one of the German infidels, that our Lord did not show a deep sense of the danger of wine when he created at this feast so excessive a quantity—some hundred gallons—by an act of omnipotent power. Would not this objection apply to every vintage? If God gives a plenteous vintage, you would not say, This is a temptation to men to drink to excess. There was no more temptation to drink to excess from his filling many large water-jars, than in his being pleased to give the sunbeams and rain-drops that make an abundant vintage. The secret of temperance is not in the cellar, but in the heart of the landlord of the wine-cellar. A Christian man will not

become intoxicated if he drinks from a cask ; a drunkard will become intoxicated if he drinks from a bottle. It is not in the quantity before you that the element of temperance is, but in the grace of God that has been planted in your hearts. ( Now it does seem to me, without the least expression of disrespect toward those who differ from me, that if God had designed that men should be universally what is called teetotal—that is, should not taste wine, or any thing that has the least alcoholic element in it—he would have prohibited the growth of the vine, and rendered fermentation absolutely impossible ; because if there were no fermentation there could be no alcoholic element generated. But he has not done so ; he does give the vintage, and he does give the fruit of the vine ; he has created fermentation just as truly as he has created vegetation ; therefore it seems to me that temperance is to arise, not from the absence of wine, but from the presence of Christian principles ; and that we are to be sober because it is a Christian duty, and not by insulation from all the elements for being the reverse. It does appear to me that character is perfected, not by being placed beyond the reach of temptation, but by being placed within the reach of it, and there gloriously triumphing by the grace of God over all its suggestions and its temptations. )

It is remarkable (and I submit it to those who differ from me) that our Lord ministered not to supply, as you perceive, a necessity, but to add an enjoyment. I admit teetotalism has done much good, and I recognise the perfect liberty of every man to adopt it who is satisfied that it will do good. I would not say one word against the Teetotal Society, because they have done good, and I pray that they may do more : but while they claim the liberty of holding their sentiments, I must not shrink from the duty of expounding what is plainly God's word. Most of

the letters of complaint I receive are upon three great topics,—first, capital punishment; secondly, teetotalism; and thirdly, war. I candidly say, that if I could, by a wish, substitute the arbitration of peace for the unsheathing of the sword, I would do it; but it is not what we would like, but what we are driven to tolerate and to have. So in reference to drunkenness. If I could, I would make every man sober; but my prescription, if you will allow it, is not a mechanical change, but a moral revolution in the unregenerate and unsanctified heart. “But there is danger,” you say, “in wine.” So there is, and there is danger in other things; there is danger in tampering with the word of God; there is danger in reading the Bible in the light of teetotalism, instead of reading teetotalism in the light of the Bible; for we may depend upon it, whenever a man begins to adopt another mode of life than that which the Saviour gave, he soon begins to adopt another rule of faith than that which the Bible affords. Let us, therefore, be jealous of the glory of God; and let us not shrink from faithfully expounding what seems to be the mind and spirit of God. And so I may speak with reference to capital punishments, on which subject I receive many remonstrances. I say I abhor them, I shrink from them, I wish society could do without them; but I cannot conceal from myself plain facts, and I may reply to some of the notes I receive by alluding to them:—It is said that the stronghold of all that advocate capital punishments (remember, I do not advocate them, I deplore the deep and terrible necessity for them) is in the text, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” I made the remark that arose from the chapter in which the text occurs, that here is distinct permission, at least, to the civil magistrate to put to death the murderer. I said this was not the Levitical law, because it was given

before the law of Levi was in existence. The objection of one correspondent is this—that God did not take away Cain's life when Cain committed murder. I answer: Perfectly true; but what God does in his sovereignty is one thing, and what God enjoins in his word upon us is quite a different thing. God ever tries the mildest means before he has recourse to more terrible ones. Well, he tried the mild means; he desired it to be seen if sparing the murderer would put an end to murder. And what took place? At the end of two thousand years, the earth was filled with "violence," a word that means murder, cruelty, rage; and then God enacted a severer law, that is, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." I cannot get over this. It is not my prejudices that influence me. I feel I am here the interpreter of that word, the glory, the perfection, the beauty of which shine forth more and more. I must bring all my likes and dislikes, all my preferences and prejudices, to God's law and to God's testimony: I dare not say what is not here, I will not shrink from saying what is here. A few have left my congregation because I will not be a teetotaler. I have no liking to wine; I can do without it as freely as any of you; but what my Lord consecrated by tasting, I will not pronounce unholy; what he has set a precedent of using, I too feel that I may use in moderation; and thus I teach, whether you like it or dislike it. I am placed in this pulpit, not to preach to your prejudices, or to echo your opinions, but to proclaim, as responsible at the judgment-bar of God, what is true, and that, by God's grace, I am determined to persevere in doing.

I therefore gather from this passage—to return to the subject before us—that wine is lawful, that it is not unholy; that the temperate use of it is legitimate; that its employment as a medicine is right. I have tried the teetotal

system, and literally and truly it did not suit me; I have tried the other system—I use but do not abuse it—and I find I am stronger and can do more work, enjoy better health, and put forth greater energy. I must, therefore, put my experience against an opposite experience. I never drank to excess in my life, and I hope none of you do. Nothing can be more degrading to a human being than drunkenness; nothing can be more disgraceful to a Christian man than excess. The great law, the beautiful law, is—the time is short: it remains for them that marry to be as though they married not, for them that sell as though they sold not, and them that buy as though they bought not; thus using the world and not abusing it, for the fashion of this world speedily passeth away.

Thus I have tried to expound this miracle. The issue of it was, that Christ's glory shone forth in it, shone forth as the Lord of creation, and as the Lawgiver to his creatures; and what I pray may be the issue of the exposition of it is, that you shall admire his power, be charmed with his mercy, believe in his sacrifice, rest upon his intercession, and anticipate that blessed day when the marriage festival shall not be that of a poor couple in Cana of Galilee, but when the bridegroom shall be the Lord of glory, and all redeemed saints shall constitute his chosen and his beautiful bride, and the marriage-supper of the Lamb shall come, and we too shall be among those who have made themselves ready. Then it will be seen that this bridal miracle in Galilee was a foreshadow of that great act at the restoration of all things, in which Jesus says, "Behold. I make all things new."

## LECTURE II.

## THE NOBLEMAN'S SICK SON.

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.—JOHN iv. 46-54.

My last lecture was on the first miracle performed by Jesus, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. I then showed how gently the power of the gospel dawned upon a world that needed it; how Christ came to perform a miracle to sanctify a wedding festival, before he came to do a miracle that was to sweeten all but a funeral bereavement. It is very clear that the gospel teaches humanity, in all its varied phases, to go to Christ. Is any man afflicted? What is he to do? To despair? No, but to pray. Is any man merry? What is he to do? Be extravagant? No, but to praise. Thus our prayers, our sorrows, and our joys equally lead us to Jesus; our smiles and our tears, our sweets and our sufferings, all the heights

and depths, the lights and shadows of human experience lead the child of God to him who can add new beauty to the one, and communicate sustaining strength and comfort to the other.

I also noticed in my last lecture, that Jesus wrought a miracle to provide, not for an absolute necessity, but a luxury. The wine failed, and Jesus wrought a miracle, by producing more than a sufficient quantity; he turned the water into wine. I inferred from this the fact that, whether it be expedient to drink wine or not, it is not sinful to do so; that certainly wine is not condemned and reprobated in Scripture as an unchristian thing. Whether it be a poisonous thing, I suppose people's experience, with that of medical men, will show; but whether it be an unscriptural thing, common sense, with the Bible open, can surely judge. If it be an unscriptural thing, Christ had not wrought a miracle in order to supply it. It has been urged, that the quantity of wine created by Christ must have been certainly a very tempting thing. Might he not, it is asked, have supplied just as much as the necessities of the company required? According to the statement given, he supplied some ninety or a hundred gallons. I answered, there is no more temptation to a sober man to be intoxicated when he drinks from a cask than when he drinks from a wineglass. The secret of temperance is not in the wine cellar, but in the landlord; it is not in what the man has, but what the man is; it is not circumstances that make a man sober, but the grace of God. Here is the grand mistake. People are constantly supposing that holiness and happiness depend upon, and result from, something outward; while, in truth, they depend on, and spring from, something inward. The world's prescription is to change the bed; God's is to heal the patient;—the world's prescription is to give man some-

thing which man has not, or to take away from man something which man has ; God's prescription is to make man what man *is* not. Put a sober man amid all the wine that Spain can produce, and he will be a sober man still ; but a drunkard any where, and he will be a drunkard still. It is the grace of God, and that alone, that can make men sober, righteous, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ our God and Saviour.

I also prefaced my last exposition by a few remarks upon the nature of miracles. I endeavoured to show that a miracle is not something which contradicts all the laws and ordinances of creation, but something rather which supplements them ; but supplements them so gloriously and sublimely, that we can feel and see that creation's Lord is present. The miracle, for instance, that Jesus did when he turned water into wine, was not in contradiction to the laws, as they are called, of nature, but the most beautiful and triumphant completion of them. The ordinary law is, that the rain-drops and the dew-drops shall fall upon the vine-leaves and blossoms, and upon the vine-roots and fibres, and that these rain-drops and dew-drops absorbed, shall, by a process that requires a year to mature it, be converted into generous wine. The difference between the dew-drops and rain-drops falling upon the vine, and being turned into grape-juice, and that fermented into wine, and the miracle wrought by our Lord, when he turned water in a minute into wine, was not a difference of kind, but simply a difference in time. What it usually takes a year to produce, it took Christ a minute to produce ; the evidence of creation's Lord being present amid creation's product, was in the speed and instance of a process which it usually takes months, or a year, to achieve. You have, therefore, in the miracle, not a discord intro-

duced into creation's harmony, but heaven's harmony come down to creation's discord; you have a prelibation, as it were, a foretaste of that glorious epoch, when all things that are wrong by sin shall be righted, and the world, as it began with paradise in its morning beauty, shall close and merge in paradise in its meridian glory.

I will preface the miracle to which I now call your attention by a few additional remarks on the nature of miracles.

First. Is there such a thing as a miracle not of God? Is it possible, or have we reason to believe from Scripture, that any power hostile in its principles to Deity, can produce a supernatural thing? Do we read in Scripture of mere jugglery, or do we read of supernatural feats, done by supernatural power, as allies to Satan's kingdom, and antagonisms to Christ's? I believe the latter: whether it be so or not, you can judge by what I state. And here I must state what it is always humbling to any one to state, that on this I have seen reason to alter my opinion: I find I have not altered a conviction upon any one vital, essential principle, but upon subordinate things I have changed, and probably I may do so again. I trust we all grow wiser as we grow older. No man should be ashamed to say, "I have altered my mind since I obtained more light." That man must be perfectly wretched who is constantly looking behind him to see that he does the deed to-day in perfect harmony with the deed done years ago, and that he holds the opinion to-day which dovetails exactly with the opinion he held five years ago. We have nothing to do with consistency, but to accept the truth as God reveals it, and act accordingly. I have stated that I thought the miracles performed by the magicians in Egypt to be jugglery. I was perplexed, and felt difficulties in reconciling all the details of their performance with this opinion. I

found this interpretation was held by many eminent men who were very competent and judicious critics. I have discovered that another opinion has been held by equally learned men, and by those who seem to be equally competent judges, namely, that these miracles performed by the magicians of Egypt were not mere legerdemain, not mere shams, but that they were feats of power performed by supernatural influence, and meant to rival and eclipse the deeds that omnipotent beneficence performed by the hand of Moses. This seems to me the truth. God says, “Against the *gods* of Egypt will I execute judgment.” Now the word translated “gods,” might throughout Scripture, in the New Testament certainly, be rendered “demons.” These demons are supposed to be fallen spirits, but the heathens imagined that they were the spirits of glorified heroes. Here the term seems so applied as to convey that supernatural agency was concerned in enabling these magicians to attempt to rival, and to endeavour to eclipse, the feats that Moses and Aaron did. And we shall see that this is the more probable, if we remember the fact that the whole religion of Egypt was an emanation from the evil one. It had its priests, its prophets, and its emissaries, charged and commissioned by the evil one, while the religion of Israel was an inspiration from God, the Holy One, having for its priests, its ministers, and its messengers, Moses and Aaron, and all the people of God. The collision that was commenced at Paradise has been carried on ever since. Supernatural powers are at this moment engaged in battle. The woman’s seed shall bruise the serpent’s head, but it is after conflict. At every dawn of a new dispensation on the part of God, there was a new collision between the powers of darkness and the powers of light. The issue was in every instance the bruising of

the serpent's head, while this involved the injury of the heel of the "woman's seed."

Some one may say, "But does it not look something approaching to puerile, that God should come into collision with Satan, or that God's agents, commissioned by omnipotence, should come into contact and controversy with agents that might now and must ultimately be crushed?" You might just say, "Why does God suffer sin and holiness to war in this world? Why does he suffer loyalty and rebellion? Why does he suffer his own people to be depressed and discouraged at times, and his enemies to triumph?" There is many a "why" we can put, when we cannot give an answer that will satisfy; but it is a matter of fact that it is so. God might pronounce a word at this moment that would go down into the depths of creation, and rise to its greatest heights, and make the whole universe blossom like the rose, and all mankind holy and happy. But he does not do so. He has told us that there will be a conflict before there will be a crown, that there will be hot battle before there shall be the prize: he has committed his cause to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of man.

At the incarnation, which was a second epoch in the history of God's dealings with mankind, we discover, what we do not find before to the same extent, demoniac possession, as if to prove, that whenever God has a great work of good in the world, Satan will always have a counter-work of evil. Whenever you see good coin circulated, you will find bad coin is put into circulation. Satan does not directly oppose the good, but he gets up something so like it that the unsuspecting may be deceived, insnared, and destroyed. When Christ came into the world, what was the great fact? God manifested in the flesh. And what was the great work that Satan set up as a counter

fact? Demons took possession of human beings, and made them their sport and their prey. I do not believe that these demoniac possessions were diseases. The language of our Lord is utterly incompatible with such a view. They were evil spirits that took up their habitations in the hearts of men, just as God entered into humanity and was manifested in the flesh. It is also worthy of notice, as corroborative proof, that when our Lord came, he was taken into the wilderness, and there he openly encountered Satan. I cannot believe, with the German Rationalists, that this was a mere dream, or eloquent myth. If that was a dream, the whole Bible is a dream; if that was not a literal historical fact, there is no literal historical fact in the Bible. The tendency introduced by Origen is perpetuated by the Rationalists still—that of trying to make every thing a myth; and the issue of it will be, that they will land where Berkeley's skepticism landed him, when he believed that he himself was a myth, that he was not a bodily substance, and that there was no such thing as matter in the world. We thus find Satan, the moment that our Lord appeared to commence his ministry, interposing with all his force, combining, in one desperate assault, the power, and genius, and resources of the archangel, with the malignity, the subtlety, the cunning of the fiend; hoping to destroy Jesus, and thus to arrest the final blow which he believed was brought nearer in that fact, namely—that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head.

In coming down to the dispensation in which we now are, we shall find indications given by the Spirit of God, that there will be superhuman feats to be perhaps witnessed by us, and that right speedily; for our Lord himself says, “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show [not the mimickry of, but shall show] great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were pos-

sible, they should deceive the very elect ;" showing us, that none but God's own people shall escape ; that such shall be the splendour, such the power, such the attractions of the deeds they shall do, that all who have but a name to live by, and whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life, shall be deceived and ensnared thereby. We read in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, that one of the characteristics of the great antichrist is, "coming after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, [not pretended wonders, but wonders that would teach and inculcate lies,] and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish." In the Apocalypse (chap. xiii. 13) we have another statement of the same kind, where one of the beasts is said to do "great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men ; and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles, which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." We have, therefore, plain indications that superhuman deeds will be done in defence of error by Satanic agency. Why should we suppose this impossible ? We admit that Satan is a fallen archangel ; once the highest, the brightest, the most glorious intelligence, next to the Deity, that we know of. If Satan retains the archangel's wisdom, (and the Bible constantly asserts this,) and is able by that wisdom to originate, concoct, and carry on things in this world that are full of the most subtle deception and mischief, why should we refuse to admit that Satan may retain, with the archangel's wisdom, the archangel's power, and do feats as well as invent schemes which are, in themselves, superhuman — signs, and wonders, and lying miracles ?

But you say, "How are we to be guided?" I do not now enter upon the intricate question how a miracle is to teach, irrespective of revelation : I merely enter upon the

question, how we, who have a revelation, are to receive such miracles, should they come. In the first place, a miracle, or superhuman deed, does not prove that the man who does it is from God; it simply says, "You must listen to this man; he is a spirit from hell, or a spirit from heaven; he comes armed with great power; he tells you he has a message to deliver, and you are bound to listen to the man, judging not of the message by the miracle, but of the miracle by the message, and of both by the word of God." We are expressly told in Deuteronomy, xiii. 1, 2, at a time when these directions were still more important than they can be to us now: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, [to confirm his mission,] and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." So we are told in reference to the whole Bible, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Then we are told again, that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners"—at sundry times, before the flood, during the days of the patriarchs, under the dispensation of the law; in divers manners, sometimes by dreams, sometimes by prophets, sometimes by types, sometimes by direct messages from heaven—"spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." That is the final communication; revelation is now closed, the Bible is complete. If then a spirit were to come on earth, and turn water into wine, or raise the dead to life, in my presence, and if he were to say, "I do

so because you ought to learn that it is lawful to worship the Virgin Mary," or, "that the doctrine of transubstantiation is true," or, "I have another book to add to the Bible," I would reject the miracle and the miracle-worker together. The apostle says, "If we or an angel from heaven preach unto you any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be anathema." Keep close to the Bible then, as God's complete testimony. All the miracles that angels from beneath can work, or pretended apostles can show, will not make me believe that they have any thing additional to this book, or accept any thing contrary to this book, as if God had changed his mind, and were about to give us a new or contradictory revelation. Our safety is within the boards of the Bible; we have a complete and sufficient Bible. The Bible has not grown old, as they say in Germany—humanity has not outgrown the Bible. Certainly in this old country of ours we believe that England's Bible is England's pole-star; and that therefore we have peace, loyalty, and love: in other countries they believe that they have outgrown the Bible; but they show that they have outgrown common sense at the same time, for every man's hand seems to be against his neighbour, and his neighbour's hand against him.

There is a distinction of great importance that I ought not to overlook here: the distinction between a discovery and a revelation. A discovery is what man can make, and man can enlarge and improve; a revelation is what God alone can give, and man cannot add to nor may take from. When Columbus arrived at America, he made a discovery, and subsequent visits have enlarged, perfected, and extended that discovery; but when God completed the Bible, he made a revelation; and no flight of ours can reach the height from which it came, and therefore no genius of ours can add to the perfection by which it is now stamped and transparently characterized.

All true, heavenly miracles have this one grand feature: they have a redemptive character; they go to counteract and reverse the effects of the fall. If we try every miracle performed by our Lord by this test, we shall find it stand. When, for instance, Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, and cured the leprous, he reinstated the subjects of these diseases in the place in which they were meant to be when God created them and pronounced them "very good." Again, when he fed the thousands with a few loaves and fishes, he gave an instalment of the reversal of the curse of barrenness, which fell upon the whole earth when man was sent forth from Eden to water it with his tears, and fertilize it with the sweat of his brow. And when he walked upon the yielding waves, and beckoned to the obedient winds, and the former slumbered at his feet like gentle babes, and the latter came to him like his own hired servants, he then showed that he was creation's Lord, about to retune creation's tangled strings, and bring it back again, like an *Æolian* harp, to its ancient order and perfection, when God's Spirit shall sweep over it, and bring out glorious and inexhaustible melody. You find in all Christ's works and miracles, the stamp of the Redeemer—the evidence of redemptive power—a proof that a new, a Divine, a beneficent Being is touching Nature, and bringing her back to what she was. So with many things that we see existing now. When you see a physician, you recognise in that physician's presence a testimony that sin has diseased humanity, and in him the standing exponent of man's convulsive effort to bring things back to what they were. And the day will come, I believe, when all this restoration will be realized, when Christ shall speak that glorious word which shall make the desert rejoice and the wilderness blossom as the rose; when there shall be no more sickness, nor sorrow, nor trial, but the former things

shall have passed away, and all old things shall have become new.

With these prefatory remarks, I enter upon the miracle which I have read—namely, the healing of the nobleman's son. This nobleman, it seems, was the prime minister, or head steward, or satrap, under Herod; a person therefore of great rank and dignity; but though high in rank he shared in the common humanity of us all. It is a great mistake to suppose that a nobleman differs from a commoner in any thing save in extrinsic and relative position. This nobleman felt the love to this child that the poorest person in Herod's realm felt; and at this moment our beloved queen does not love her prince or her princess better than that poor ragged mother in Drury Lane loves the little babe that she clasps to her bosom, and can scarcely shield from the summer's heat or protect from the winter's winds. Underneath all the pomp and splendour and noise of state there is heard the great under-tone of our common humanity; amid all the distinctions and the differences, which are beautiful, and graceful, and strengthening to the social fabric, there yet run, cohering together, the roots of our common nature, the traces of our common ruin, and, blessed be God, sparkling amid these the hopes of our final restoration.

Greatness of rank does not exempt people from sickness and death. Great men and noblemen are sometimes tempted to believe so. One thinks a battalion of bayonets around him can give him safety; another thinks that the splendour of equipage, a readiness of ministry and wealth and innumerable resources, can keep out sickness. It is a great mistake; experience shows it to be so; there are sick-beds in palaces, and there are aching temples upon beds of down; many a time when a poor man goes to his work with a merry heart, and with few thorns and cares to

pierce it, the head that has a coronet or a crown on it aches all the day long, and has little rest by night. The rich, instead of being the least exempt, are the most exposed. The loftiest trees are first rent by the lightning, and the highest pinnacles are first smitten by the thunder-bolt.

This nobleman, one of the greatest in the land, had a sick son, and so far was placed on a level with the poorest and meanest in the land. That sick son was his greatest mercy. God makes sickness and illness in our families contribute to our common good. If this nobleman's son had not been sick, that nobleman's soul had never found a Saviour. It is thus that God makes what we think the most painful experience the pioneer of the greatest happiness, even eternal happiness and joy. It is thus that the leech is applied; it feeds itself at our expense, but the physician stands by, and overrules it for our safety and future health. For such ends God sends sickness into the cradle, affliction into the family. At times, when the sky is overshadowed, when the heart droops, and the hopes fade, we begin to look up to the everlasting hills; and, blessed be God, many a one, noble and ignoble, has learned this lesson—that what prosperity could not do sickness has done, and that the full cup which we worship has been mercifully displaced by the empty cup, which Christ afterward filled with special and unspeakable blessings.

Let us learn also from this parable, that it is possible to have very high conceptions of Jesus and yet not to have conceptions of him high enough. This nobleman "went to him and besought him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death." He believed Jesus had power to heal, but he believed it was limited power, that it was restricted to personal contact; and he had to learn that Jesus had more power than he

believed him to possess, by the happy deliverance of his son. Jesus replied to him in what seemed to be a rebuke, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." This was to teach us that the nobleman was driven to Christ by the sense, the foreboding sense, of the loss of his son; not drawn to Christ by a clear and beautiful perception of the blessings that Christ had to give. Yet, mark the fact: Christ nevertheless received him. What a blessed truth is this, that Christ will accept you, if drawn to him by a sight of his excellences and mightiness to save; while he will not reject you if you are rejected by all the world besides, and come to him, as a last resource, for mercy and forgiveness! His bosom has room to welcome the refugee from the trials and sorrows of the world, as well as the refugee from the condemnation of sin, seeking deliverance and acceptance before him.

The nobleman scarcely listened to his rebuke, but persisted in his cry, "Come down ere my child die." He was so overwhelmed with a sense of the suffering of his child, and with the fear of that child's death, that he scarcely heard the rebuke. How true to human nature is this! how like what we are! He could scarcely listen to the divine lesson, so mighty within him was the human and the paternal sympathy. Herein we are taught the secret of persevering prayer. This nobleman persevered in begging so hard because he felt so deep an attachment to his child. The secret of our persevering in seeking blessings from God, is in the depth of our sense of the want of them. To say to people, "Pray fervently, pray constantly," is almost to waste one's words; the first thing is to convince them that they have great sins, that they are in deep peril, that relief is possible; then bid them pray fervently, and with importunity. The nobleman had great suffering; the fear of great loss overcame all obstructions, and brought

the highest man in the realm, who had all eyes fastened on him, and many tongues ready to deride and laugh at him, to Jesus, the carpenter's son, Jesus of Nazareth, because he, and he alone, could cure and restore his child.

Our Lord at first seemed to repulse and drive him away; but at the very time that he seemed to reject him, he was preparing to do what he requested. This teaches us another lesson—that we are not to suppose that Christ withholds an answer to our prayer because he does not answer that prayer always in the way that we wish. Christ answered the nobleman's prayer, but not in the way that the nobleman expected. So will he do with us. We hear the noise of what we think an approaching doom, and lo! it is the first tones of that sweet and beautiful voice which rang so musically amid the storm of old, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid." We see the cloud, dark and black and ominous, and we fancy it is the chariot of the judgments of the Lord; but lo! it is only sweeping past to disclose to us a brighter sun, and to allow us to bathe in the beams of a balmier and a better day. For Christ immediately added, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." What was true then is so now. Christ's word spoken at Cana provoked its echo at Capernaum; sickness recognised in it the healer of diseases, fled from his victim, and left this memorial in its flight, "Truly this was the Son of God." Christ is now in his holy place, and we are upon the earth; but if his word could travel five miles, and heal that nobleman's son on that distant sick-bed, the same word can travel from his throne in the loftiest heaven, cleave its way, unspent in its transit, unweakened by the distance, and go into the sick man's heart, into the dead man's grave, into the guilty man's conscience, and into the sad home's loneliness, and into the matron's agony, and leave on the place that it strikes the first flower of Paradise

regained, and kindle in the heart that it visits the first rays of the everlasting day. His arm is not shortened, that it cannot save; his word is not less mighty, that it cannot still comfort. He is what he was. There is a connecting and transmissive wire between heaven and earth; there is a communication with the skies and with us. Let us rejoice that it is thus; and let us feel that along that electric wire that knits the heart of our Redeemer to us his children, there travel instantly all his sympathies down to sanctify us, and all our prayers up to receive an answer exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask, or think, or desire.

What adds to the glory of this miracle performed by our Lord is this—the nobleman was brought to Christ by the sickness of his child. We find that the miracle had a double effect. The same word that cured the sickness of the son, cured the skepticism of the father, for it is added, “And the nobleman believed.” This teaches us the great lesson, that no man ever interests himself in the welfare of another without receiving a reflex blessing in doing so. I have read of a mother who waited upon a parish minister in Scotland, and who, on seeking admission to the Lord’s table, complained that she could not pray. The minister said to her, “You have an only child, who is in delicate health, (which was the fact,) go home and pray for that child, and come to me next week.” She went home and prayed as directed, and when she went to the minister the next week, she said, “I have been praying for my child, and in doing so, I have learned to pray for myself.” It will be so with you; if you try to do good to others, you will find the good done chiefly to yourself; if you will go and teach in a Sunday-school, you will find you will be taught richly and distinctively yourself; if you will feed the hungry, clothe the naked, minister to the wants and necessities of the poor, you will find a reflex influence that

will make you feel more happy, and find yourself vastly more rich. It is God's great law, that in watering others we shall be watered ourselves. Who are the happiest men? Always the busiest men. We shall find that the reason of all that miserable feeling which people do not know how to get over, and which leads them to play-houses, operas, balls, and all the "broken cisterns" which the world can supply, is just because they are doing nothing good. Begin to do good, and you will begin to be happy. It is God's great ordinance, and man cannot reverse it. I have read of one who in despair and under derangement had resolved to commit suicide by drowning himself—and no man ever does so who is not deranged, and whose responsibility, therefore, has ceased—and as he went to do so, he met a poor miserable woman in rags, who begged a half-penny from him. Instead of that, he gave her sixpence. Her face glowed with delight, and she thanked him in such terms that it went to the very depths of the man's heart. "Surely," said he, "if I can be the means of creating such happiness in one human being, God has something more for me to do." And this was the means of saving his life. Learn then to be beneficent men, not merely benevolent men. We have plenty of benevolent people, who *wish* well; but what we want is beneficent people, who *do* well, who carry their wishes out into practical operation. I say, God's great law is, that we shall find happiness in doing good. The happiest people are the people who abound most in good works. I think I have told you that all the words in our language that convey happiness, mean coming out of self, doing something for others: "transport," to be carried beyond one's self; "ecstasy," standing out of one's self, and the like: every word denoting the intensest happiness, denotes that which is the most self-sacrificing, doing good for the love of others.

I may notice also one thing remarkable in this miracle; namely, a point of contrast between it and an analogous miracle, related in Matt. viii.: “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” Notice here the contrast. The nobleman came and asked Christ to come to his house and heal his son, believing that unless he personally came, his son could not be healed. This centurion, a very much humbler person, came to our Lord, saying, Speak the word only, you need not come, and my *servant* shall be healed. Jesus in the one case spoke the word where he was asked to come, but did not come; in the other case he came, where he was asked only to speak the word. Is there any lesson taught in this distinction? It may be this perhaps—that little faith, as in the case of the nobleman, was invigorated into great faith by Jesus not going as he wanted him; and in the case of the centurion, his humility was deepened by Jesus condescending to come when he only asked him to speak the word. Perhaps also this lesson was to be taught us, that Christ is no accepter of persons; and this is not the least beautiful feature in it. A nobleman asks the Son of God to come and heal his son, his heir; a duke asks him to come and heal a marquis. Our Lord does not go, but *speaks* the word. A poor sergeant in the army, a non-commissioned officer, asks him to speak only, and heal his domestic servant, and Jesus *visits* that servant on the sick-bed. This precious lesson is thereby taught, that the house of God ought to be, as I trust it will be, a sequestered nook—sequestered from ambition and conflict, from

frivolity and folly, in which the rich and the poor shall meet together, and feel that the Lord is the Maker of them all. I do not like to see a congregation of aristocrats merely, and I do not like to see a congregation of ragged people merely; I love to see the greatest aristocrat of the land and the humblest beggar from the streets listening to the same gospel, hearing the same truths, and made to feel that they have points of identity lasting like the stars, but points of distinction evanescent as the morning dew. So our Lord taught that in the house of God, as in the grave, there should be no distinction of persons.

We notice next the interesting fact, that the servants rushed forth to tell their master the joyful news that his son was healed. I like this trait; the servants did not feel, as they are too much taught to feel in this commercial capital, that they are hired to do so much work, and when they have done this work to think there is not a point of contact with the family besides. These servants sympathized with the nobleman; they felt that his joy was their joy, his happiness their happiness, and his interest their interest.

The nobleman, not expecting an instant cure, asked the question—and this brings out the exquisite truth of the narrative—at what hour his son began to amend. He expected the cure would be, like all other cures, a gradual and progressive one. When the servants informed him, however, he learned that Christ had answered his prayer far above what he thought. His query was, “When did he *begin to amend?*” The joyful answer was, “The fever left him.” And he found, on comparing notes, that it was at the very same hour at which Jesus said, “Go thy way, thy son liveth.” Before, he believed in the possibility of a special act; now, he believes in Christ his glorious Saviour; and not only himself but his whole house believed.

This son was under his roof ; he was ill at home ; and when he was miraculously cured, the whole house, from the highest to the lowest, recognised the claims of Jesus, accepted the good news, and became followers of the Lamb of God ! While noble and ignoble are on a level in the sight of God, yet it is a great point gained when a person of high rank, great power, extensive influence, is brought to know, and love, and feel the gospel. You ask why ? Because he occupies a loftier pinnacle, he is the observed of all observers ; and according to a law in this world, the example of those who tread the high places of the land descends with rapid power, so much so that a country reflects very much its court ; as the high are, the humble generally become. I believe, therefore, that on the aristocracy of the land there rests a weighty responsibility. Therefore I rejoice to see, in the present day, our nobles taking the chair, and appearing on the platforms, at meetings of our Sunday-schools, day schools, and ragged schools, and advocating, what is really the substance and the sinews of our strength and stability, the Christian enlightenment of the humbler classes of society. We may rest assured, if the lower stratum of the pyramid becomes disorganized, the apex, however it may reflect the sunbeams, will soon be overturned. The safety of the country is in the Christianization of the great masses that lie below ; and those noblemen and persons in the highest classes, who wish to learn how tottering their position may be, should occasionally take a plunge into the alleys and lanes of London, and they will see how much is to be done, before they can lay their heads upon their pillows, and feel that they are secure ; before, above all, they can stand at the judgment-seat, and remember they have done what they ought to have done.

In the next place we learn, from the study of this mi-

rael, that we may pray—and here is a very precious lesson—that temporal affliction may be averted from us. Is there any one present who feels the touch of death is upon him, that the cold shadow of the grave, as the issue of some lingering disease, begins to overcloud and darken him? It is not forbidden to you, my brother, my sister, to pray that you may be healed. Is there any one in this assembly who has a friend labouring under some lingering disease, a son or daughter drawing near to the gates of the tomb? It is not forbidden to you, it is not unscriptural, to pray, to pray fervently, that God would be pleased to spare that son, and preserve that daughter, and keep to you that friend. The nobleman so prayed for his son, and his heart's desire was answered. Is there a mother here whose babe is dying? Do you gaze sadly upon its fading life—pronounced to be so by the skill that has attended it? May you pray, “O Lord, spare this beautiful flower, this memorial of departed Eden; let it not be blasted; we would gather it into our bosom; we would tend it, water it, and nurse it a little longer; spare it, O Lord?” May you pray so? Who will forbid you? Not Jesus, for he prayed, in his agony, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;” but he added, what I trust you will have grace to add, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

My dear brethren, if we thus bring the sicknesses of our friends, our sons and daughters, to the Saviour, may we bring especially their souls to him! We can bring their spiritual condition, in the sight of God, to the Saviour anywhere. Bring your children to Christ, to be blessed by him; by sympathy, by Christian education, by love, by prayer, and, lastly, by your example. They are precious. These children in the streets are not weeds, and are not to be crushed under the feet of the thoughtless traveller; they are flowers—faded flowers, I admit, soiled and injured

flowers ; but your hand may replace them, raise them, and nurse them, and bring them below the beams of a better sun, the rains of a better influence, and they will bloom again like flowers of Paradise. So we shall hasten to that day in which the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick," and the healing of the nobleman's son shall prove a faint foreshadow of the healing of all that is diseased.

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## LECTURE III.

## THE SOLDIER'S SICK SERVANT.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.  
—MATT. viii. 5-13.

I WILL preface the exposition I give of this interesting miracle by some remarks in continuation of those I have already made on the nature of the miracles of our Lord.

It is not uninteresting to contrast the miracles performed by our Lord with those performed by his most distinguished servants in the Old Testament dispensation. In looking at the miracles performed of old, and prior to the advent of Christ, it seems as if they were done with greater difficulty, not because God was less mighty, but because his omnipotence was not so largely bestowed. For instance, Moses, in removing the leprosy of his sister, wrestles and persists in prayer, “ Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee;” but when we read the record of the Saviour’s miracle in

an analogous circumstance, we find simply his touch; his accents are, "Be thou clean," and the party is so. Elijah prays long, and sends his servant seven times before the rain begins to appear; Christ speaks, and the winds are hushed, and the waves are still. Elisha, with great effort, and after partial failure, restores the life of the Shunamite's child; our Lord speaks to the dead, "Come forth," and the dead come forth accordingly. This was owing partly to the less glorious dispensation; partly to the greater remoteness from that day when the earth shall be restored, and all its discord shall be reduced to harmony; and partly to illustrate a principle which pervades the Acts of the Apostles, as well as Genesis and the Pentateuch, namely, that Christ's miracles (and this is a very important and striking evidence of the deity of Christ) were done directly by himself, while the miracles performed by the apostles and patriarchs and prophets were done, as acknowledged by themselves in fact, in virtue of a delegated power. Thus, for instance, when Moses divided the Red Sea, "Stand still, and behold the salvation of God, which he will show unto you," he referred the miracle, whatever it might be, to the instant power, and therefore to the exclusive glory, of God. When the apostles performed miracles, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, they were done with such a preface as the following: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," and again, "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." But when Christ performed a miracle, he said, "I will, be thou clean;" and again, "I say unto thee, arise." Now you have, in the very peculiar language used by the apostles when they put forth miraculous power, proof that theirs was a borrowed power, a reflected influence; but when Jesus performed the miracles, you can see that it was not the act of man, but the touch of that finger that created

the stars, and wields them in their orbits, and that made all things, visible and invisible.

There is another contrast between the miracles of the Old and of the New Testament perhaps worth noticing; it is this, that all the miracles recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures were more in contact with external nature; they were more visible, more colossal, and if I might use the expression without being misconstrued—more gross in their character. It was the rending earthquake, the fire losing its power to consume, the wild beasts their ability to devour—great, startling, portentous acts, fitted to awe and subdue the senses of all that beheld them. But when we look at the miracles of the New Testament, we find they are neither the whirlwind that rushes in its fury, nor the earthquake that spreads its terrible vibrations, nor the fire that consumes all that approaches it, but the “still small voice,”—miracles that relate more to man’s soul than to man’s body, and occupy, as it were, a loftier sphere, hold communion with sublimer things, and give evidence of a new, and nobler, and more glorious dispensation.

Having made this contrast between the miracles recorded in the Old Testament and those in the New, I may also contrast the miracles of the New Testament with the pseudo or pretended miracles ascribed to our Lord in those silly legends composed in the second and third century, and, by courtesy, called the New Gospel, such as what was called “The Gospel of the Infancy,” and “The Gospel of Nicodemus.” They were legends concocted in cells, and palmed, some by superstitious, and others by wicked, persons upon the world, all bearing internal and external evidence of their utter absurdity and forgery. One of the most striking proofs of their absurdity—an indirect, but very powerful proof—is to be seen in the miracles they record as performed by Jesus. There are other proofs of their

forgery, such as their making allusion to facts which did not occur till centuries after they were written, and their containing things that are positively contradictory, absurd, and ridiculous ; but the most complete proof of their falsehood is in an investigation of the miracles which they ascribe to Jesus. In the gospel every miracle performed by Jesus was subordinated to some great truth he was teaching, or associated with the moral and spiritual well-being of the person who was its subject ; and you are less struck with the miracle than with the worker of the miracle. Every miracle that Jesus did withdraws you from the deed of beneficence and power, and surrounds the doer of it with a halo of imperishable and resplendent glory. But the miracles ascribed to Jesus as recorded in these false legends which I have alluded to, are mere portents : they are fitted to make people stare, and wonder, and be amazed ; they are more like the deeds of a magician than the doings of the Son of God. You cannot conceive a more complete contrast than that between the simple and grand feats of power, reflecting glory on the doer, recorded in the Gospels, and the silly, puerile portents, influencing merely the senses of the reader, recorded in what have been called the "pseudo-gospels," written afterward. We may notice, too, this peculiarity ; every miracle recorded in the New Testament is related to have been done by Christ during the three years of his ministry ; and all the miracles recorded in the false gospels are all described to have been done by Jesus when he was an infant. The grandeur of the gospel is, that it speaks of nothing but what contributes in some shape to the glory of God and to the edification of the church ; the peculiarity of these legends is, that they speak of nothing but what is calculated to startle, to amaze, or to make the beholder stare and wonder. You have in them, too, a direct contradiction to what is ex-

pressly stated in the gospel. In the second chapter of the Gospel of St. John we are told that the miracle performed at the marriage-feast was the beginning of Christ's miracles; but these Gospels record miracles said to have been performed when he was a child or a babe; the one, therefore, directly contradicts the other. There is also this peculiarity about the miracles ascribed to Christ in these false legends, that none of them have the redemptive and restorative character of the miracles of Christ. Every miracle that Christ did seems to bring nature back to her primeval harmonies, casting out the disease, the discord, the intrusive and disorganizing elements that sin introduced, and giving, as it were, an earnest and a foreshadow of that blessed day when all sounds shall be harmony, all lessons shall be light, and all affections shall be love.

Thus, then, we see the position that the miracles in the New Testament occupy with reference to past genuine miracles recorded in the Old Testament Scripture, and with reference to the pseudo-miracles subsequently ascribed to Christ in legends that impiously assumed his name. Having made these remarks, I will turn your attention now to the miracle immediately before us.

Jesus, we are told, had entered into Capernaum, and a centurion, that is, a subaltern in the Roman army, approached him, anxious for the health and recovery of his servant or slave. This centurion was what was called "a proselyte at the gate;" he was one of those Gentiles who felt the worthlessness of heathenism, the absurdity of its polytheistic rites, and saw in the doctrines of the Jews, interpolated as they were, mutilated as they had become, a response to what was deepest and most earnest in his heart; he abjured the heathenism which could not satisfy him, and cleave to that living religion which the Pharisee had overlaid, but from which truth still broke forth in

much of its primeval purity and brightness. He was of the same class, plainly, as the centurion spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles :—“ Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band ; a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” Just previous to the advent of Christ there were many of these proselytes making their appearance, and one can see in their development the commencement of a great process. They were the links that connected the Jew with the Gentile world ; they were, so to speak, those intermediate persons who were in communion with the Jew upon the one hand, and in contact with the Gentile upon the other hand ; and were the premonitory signs and symptoms of that great fusion of the human family, in which there should be neither Jew nor Gentile, nor Greek nor barbarian, nor bond nor free, but Christ should be all and in all. They were, in fact, instalments of that sublime fellowship which knows neither Jew nor Gentile, which calls no man clean, or unclean, or common, but recognises all as brothers who bear the stamp and the superscription of a divine and heavenly likeness.

It is a remarkable fact, that whenever God is about to take a great step in the development of his kingdom upon earth, he always gives preliminary signs of its approach. The great fact that was to occur when Christ came was the fusion of the Jews and Gentiles into one redeemed family. The preliminary foreshadows, flung back upon the world from that Sun before he rose above the horizon, were these proselytes at the gate—men who were not Jews, because they did not conform to all the rites of the Jews, and who were not Gentiles, because they rejected the polytheistic religion of the Gentiles, but who therefore constituted the connecting links and bands between the two, and the pioneers of that brighter and blessed fellow-

ship, in which Jew and Gentile should be lost in the family name, "Christian," and Christ should be all and in all. So it seems to me that, in the day in which we live, we have the preliminary signs of some great fusion about to take place. We saw that before the fusion of Jew and Gentile occurred, we had all these premonitory signs and fore-shadows; and in the present day we may notice going on processes and efforts that are oft disappointed, attempts that are frequently frustrated and broken, to make all mankind feel the sympathies and respond to the touch of a common and a glorious brotherhood. It seems to me that all the discoveries of the age are but the pioneers and preparations for this. I look upon the triumphs of steam, the railroad, and the electric wire, the Great Exhibition of 1851, as portions of that great net which is being cast over the length and the breadth of the human family, to teach all mankind, by extinguishing space, shortening time, and removing obstructions to the interchange of the sympathies of life, that a day comes with all the speed, as it will dawn with all the splendour, of the lightning, when Scottish, English, Irish, European, Asiatic, African, shall lose their distinctive denominational names in that name which was pronounced in scorn, if proclaimed from heaven, at Antioch, but which will be sounded in the everlasting jubilee, and Christ and Christian shall be all and in all.

This centurion, then, who was thus "a proselyte at the gate," came to Christ, as it is recorded in one Gospel, or sent to Christ by his friends, as it is recorded in another—and what one does by his representative he does himself; for you will often see this interchange of terms used in the New Testament. But his sense of unworthiness was so great, that he said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." He felt that Christ was a high and a holy being, and that he was, though a proselyte and

a worshipper of the true God, a sinful and a fallen man, and therefore he says, with profound, not feigned, humility, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." He that accounts his house unworthy of the presence of so great a Master, has that humility which will lead Christ to account his heart worthy of his entrance and abiding. Christ sat in the house of the Pharisee ; he took possession of, and dwelt in, the heart of the Roman soldier.

The profession of this centurion, as the word plainly implies, was that of a soldier. Many persons think that soldiers are emphatically sinful and criminal persons, and that the very existence of a soldier ought not to be. Some seem to think that to suppose that a soldier can be a Christian, is to suppose what is impossible ; and that to think that there can be any heirs of the kingdom of heaven in the army, is a stretch of charity which they are not prepared for. Now I always feel that that is not charity which is more charitable than God, but the very reverse ; it is delusion and deception. You will find in the New Testament Scriptures some of the most illustrious saints, who wore the uniform and wielded the weapons of Cæsar. I shrink from war ; I deplore it as a stern, a terrible, an awful necessity ; and, if I could by a touch, or by the offering of a prayer, I would turn every sword into a plough-share, and every spear into a pruning-hook. I would reverse the process of the modern Romans, in 1848, and would turn the cannons into church-bells, and make them the minstrels of a sweeter and a far more holy music ; I would turn shot into rails, and men-of-war into merchantmen in every harbour. If I could, I would ; and I pray that right speedily what is the burden of a thousand prophecies may be the realization of delightful and glorious facts. But the question is not, my dear friends, Is war desirable ? We are all agreed that war is a most undesirable thing, and

earnestly would we all pray that the soldier and his stern profession may become both obsolete together. But there is the common-sense view of the question, which we are not at liberty to despise ; and Christianity is the highest common sense. Suppose now that we were to disband our army and our navy, what would be the result ? If other nations would enter into a compact to do the same, and if we were sure that they would keep to it, then we might do so ; but if they will not, and do not, but girdle us around, not to defend but to destroy us, would it be Christianity, or would it be lunacy, in our country, to disband its army and break up all its fleet ? If all Europe were Christian, that is, if the Millennium were come, then, of course, what is now required would be perfectly expedient ; we should have to extinguish all our police, turn jails into churches, our soldiers into missionaries, and we should need neither shot, nor sword, nor sabre, nor cannon ; and the nations then "would learn war no more." But the Millennium is not come, there is the plain, unequivocal fact. By all means try to prevent war. Get pirates, thieves, tyrants, autocrats, mobs, fierce, seditious men, to arbitrate ; but the sad fact is, that these men insist upon striking first, and arbitrating afterward. If they would arbitrate before they strike—if they would consider and discuss before they draw, it would be well ; but it is a fact that they do not so, and the more defenceless you are, the more ready they are to strike. It does seem to me, with all deference to the wisdom, and the knowledge, and the experience of those that know better, that this is the old process, that has failed so often, of trying to do by conventionalism that which can only be done by Christianity, attempting by mechanical arrangements that which can only be effected by spiritual and moral means. If men would only expend in the spread of the Bible, in extending the gospel, in contributing to mission-

ary societies, in praying, "Thy kingdom come," more time and more means, they would do more to render war unnecessary than by any other process that has been tried. In the beautiful words of an American poet, written when he looked at an arsenal, with arms piled to the roof—

"This is the arsenal. From floor to ceiling,  
Like a huge organ, rise the burnish'd arms ;  
But from their silent pipes, no anthem pealing,  
Startles the villages with strange alarms.

Ah ! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,  
When the death-angel touches those soft keys !

What  
Will mingle with their awful symphonies !

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,  
Were half the wealth bestow'd in camps and courts,  
Given to redeem the human mind from error,  
There were no need of arsenals and forts ;

The warrior's name would be a name abhor'd,  
And every nation that should lift again  
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead  
Would wear for evermore the curse of Cain.

Down the dark future, through long generations,  
War's echoing sounds grow fainter, and they cease  
Like to a bell, with solemn sweet vibrations :  
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace."

Peace ! No longer from its brazen portals  
The blast of war's great organ shakes the skies,  
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,  
The holy melodies of love arise."

Such we know will be the end, and such alone are the means by which it can be accomplished.

Here then was a soldier, and yct a Christian ; and if God has pronounced him clean, shall we pronounce him unclean ? In the Gospel by St. Luke it is stated that the soldiers came to John. I am stating this to show you, not

that war is beautiful, but that being a soldier is not sinful; it may seem supererogation, and yet it is not so, to prove this in the present day. The soldiers came to John, and "likewise demanded of him, saying, What shall we do?" Did he say, "Your very profession is a crime, abjure it?" No. "He said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Can I suppose that to be a soldier is thereby and therefore to be a sinner, or, in other words, that war is lawful in no circumstances, when John thus spake to the soldiers, and gave them his command and guidance?

This Christian soldier came to Jesus, and asked him to interfere in behalf of his sick slave. He was a brave man, for such a Roman soldier must be; he was an humble man, for such a Christian always is; and he was a kind, an affectionate, and a loving man—such the choicest of humanity is; and he felt an interest in the health and happiness of his poor sick slave. There were no servants in ancient times in the sense in which servants are regarded now; they were bought and sold in the market; they were treated by the heathens with a consummate disregard of every instinct and feeling of humanity. This soldier, feeling such a deep interest in the well-being of his slave, is on the one hand a beautiful trait, and creditable to him, and on the other hand it is significant of that great lesson that Christianity teaches, that the servant and the master, in the sight of God, stand upon the same platform, and must be tried at the same tribunal.

When he drew near to our Lord, he expressed his unworthiness to approach him. His profession as a soldier served him with arguments as a Christian. He said, "I am a man under authority." At first sight this seems a strange expression: one would have thought that he would have said, "I am a man having authority." But no, he

argues from the lesser to the greater: "I am a subaltern, and there is over me a commanding officer," (as if he had said, "I am a lieutenant"); "and if I who am but a subaltern, an under-officer, have such power, that I can say to this soldier, 'Take up that position,' and to that soldier, 'Be sentinel there,' and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he doeth it, much more, surely, thou, who art the commander of all the armies of the skies, and the ruler of all the inhabitants of the earth, hast but to speak the word, and my servant then will be instantly healed." His idea of the sovereignty of Christ was beautiful and grand. The leading idea in the soldier's mind was his profession, and that profession supplied him with a conception of the grandeur of him who is the Autocrat of heaven and earth, the true *Imperator*, of whose authority Cæsar was but an imperfect and poor shadow. The soldier argues, "If I then, as a subaltern, have so much power that every man is subject to my authority,—that, in virtue of the discipline that prevails in the Roman army, instant obedience is rendered to every command,—then, Lord Jesus, great Saviour, great King, speak to this disease, and it will instantly obey thee; breathe a word to my sick slave, and he will rise and come unto thee; thou who art the Lord of all power and might, thou hast but to say the word, and angels will come and execute thy will; or wind, and wave, and water, and earth, and sky, will meet together and conspire to do thy behests." We are thus taught how one's profession may often be made serviceable to one's Christianity; and how lessons may be gathered from all the sequestered nooks and by-paths of domestic, private, and professional life, which will cast new lustre on the truths, and inspire with new force the precepts of the everlasting gospel.

Jesus, we are told, admired the confidence and faith of the centurion, and said he had not seen "so great faith,

no, not in Israel." What does this teach us? That Christ is pleased the most when we put the most confidence in him. We are not guilty of presumption on the one hand, or of rash and daring intrusion on the other, when we lay much upon the shoulder of Christ for him to bear and endure for us. The more we trust him, the more he feels he is honoured by that trust. Christ is not angry with you because you have asked too much of him, but he is grieved and vexed that you should have such diffidence in his love, such distrust of his omnipotence, that you ask too little of him. Ask great things, and he will give you great things. He does exceeding abundantly *above* all that you can ask or think. We have evidence here that such asking is not presumption, in the simple fact, that the deepest humility and the greatest faith were combined in this Roman soldier of whom I am now speaking.

We read that our blessed Lord heard his request, put forth his power, healed his slave, and restored him to his master; and he was so charmed and smitten with this specimen of piety, like a wild flower gathered from the desert, not a garden-flower nursed in the vineyard of Israel, that he said, "Verily I say unto you, many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God." In other words, he teaches us that there are Christians where we suspect not, in circumstances, in cities, in countries, and in shapes where the natural eye cannot see them. There are more Christians in the world than bigotry will allow on the one hand, and there are fewer Christians in the world than latitudinarianism is pleased to think on the other hand. The eye of true charity can see Christians where the eye of the world can see none. The wings of love can cross breadths, and the feet of love can wade through depths, and find trophies of the power, and monuments of the

mercy of God; unsuspected and unseen by the multitude of mankind. Our Lord says, "*Many* shall come from the east and the west." I rejoice in the prospect that the numbers of the saved will not be a few. The whole language of Christianity is, "*Many* shall be saved." The language of the Apocalypse, (chap. vii.,) so beautiful and so rich with thoughts descriptive of the future, is, "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." And in the nineteenth chapter we read, "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." I observed in my Apocalyptic Sketches, that this alleluia, the first Hebrew word in Revelation, is the Jewish voice. It is at the destruction of Babylon, that the Jews shall return, and sing "Alleluia." And I may mention a very interesting fact—that the Jews were seen circulating the New Testament, and selling it in the streets of Rome, in 1848; and these Jews, although they did not believe in the gospel, were actually quoting 2 Thess. ii., and demonstrating that the pope is the Anti-christ, and that the Romans had better not let him come back, nor have any thing to do with him; as if a strong foreshadow of that day, when the voice of the Jew shall join with that of the Christian at the destruction of Rome, and shall say, "Alleluia! at length, not Antichrist, but the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

We have an intimation, then, that a great multitude shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God. Notice here the identity of faith and the identity of love. Not sect, nor rite, nor nationality are the bonds

of union and communion with each other. It is not said that only the circumcised, and baptized, or only the Jew shall come, or those that pronounce the same shibboleth, and worship in the same form; but it is said that *many* from the north, and the south, and the east, and the west, shall come, and, having the same Lord, the same faith, the same hope, the same joy, shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. This teaches us what is the true bond of the unity of the church of Christ. It is not all using the same liturgy, or using the same forms, or worshipping in the same manner, or worshipping in the same place, or being under the same ecclesiastical government; but it is in all having the same centre—Christ; the same Father, whose children we are; the same Spirit, whose sanctified subjects we are. Christ is called the Husband of his church. “Husband” comes from two Saxon words, meaning “house-bond.” The husband is the house-bond, and Christ is the great house-bond of his house—all bound and knit together, finding their unity in subjection to and in communion with him.

Thus, then, men of all classes, of all castes, of all forms of worship, shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; men of every clime—the African from his burning sand, the Laplander from his everlasting snows. The children of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, who met once in the ark, shall meet in Christ the true Ark, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Men of every political dynasty—the accomplished royalist and the stern republican, the subjects of good governments and the victims of bad ones, shall all meet together in heaven, for they have met in Christ; men of all ranks, from all circles, degrees, and positions in social life; men of all kinds and degrees of intellect—the philosopher and the peasant,

"He renown'd for ages yet to come,  
And she not heard of half a mile from home."

shall meet, if believers, and mingle in that glorious fellowship.

We are told that they shall *sit down* with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob: that indicates perfect repose, perfect rest, the sabbath of the soul. The "rest that remaineth for the people of God" will have then begun; the soldier from the field of battle, the sailor from the restless deck, the mourner from his weeping, the martyr from his flame shroud—all, gathered together by the attraction of their common Lord, and pervaded by the sympathies of a common faith, shall sit down together with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

Notice, too, the dignity of it—they "shall *sit down*." Servants stand; kings and princes sit. God's people are to sit on thrones. "They shall be," says the apostle, "kings and priests unto Christ."

Another idea is that of enjoyment. It will be a festival—a feast for the imagination, a theme for the intellect, a fête for the heart; all the faculties of man's soul will be feasted with things congenial to their nature. It will be the repose which all humanity, after its exile and its weary wanderings below, shall feel to be its home; and in which home-born joys, like swallows under a roof, shall nestle for ever.

And there will be not only dignity, and rich enjoyment, and true rest, but there will be recognition of each other. "Sit down" with whom? With Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Can we sit with them, and not recognise them? Shall we know that the promise is performed, if we do not actually see those patriarchs, and feel that they are so? I hope when all the shadows of time shall have ceased, and the pulse of the first resurrection shall have been felt

by the sleeping dust, and realized by the glorified spirits of the redeemed of God, that there will be a meeting so grand, so noble, so glorious, that the imagination of the brightest poet, even in his happiest imaginings, has never conceived it. I believe I shall see Adam, who first sinned, and was also first saved, and hear from his lips the story of Paradise lost, and Paradise regained. I shall see Enoch, and learn of one who never tasted death, but passed from the life that now is to the eternal world without having waded the narrow sea that flows between. I shall see Noah, and hear him relate the story of the ark,—what he felt, what he hoped, and how he trembled, how gloriously he was saved, and how happy he now feels. I shall meet with Moses the great prophet, and Aaron the great priest, with John the evangelist, and with Peter the apostle, and hear each tell the story of his trials, the secret of his triumphs, and the happiness he now feels when the battle is won—when the palm is in the hand, and the wreath of victory twined about the brow. We shall see things that are now unseen, and taste joys that we have now no conception of; and if we felt all the grandeur and magnificence that awaits us in reversion, I do believe that, in the case of the children of God, the reluctance would not be to die, but to live; and that oftener would this cry rise from the very depths of the sanctified heart, “Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away, and that I might enter into that rest, and be with God for ever!” It is because we are so long accustomed to the old house, and so acquainted with all its nooks, its recesses, and its windings, that we do not like to leave it; but if we could gaze upon that glorious palace, if we could only measure its splendid halls—those halls where the altar is Christ, where the floor is emerald, and the dome is sapphire, and the very dust is diamond—I am sure we should thirst and long for an en-

trance into that blessed city, which hath no need of sun nor of moon, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof.

It is nearer than many of us think, and either it will soon come to us, or we must go to it: one or the other must be. If we are now the people of God, the partition-wall that separates it from us becomes thinner every day. One can feel the pulses of that great heart of love to which we shall soon draw near; one can almost hear, in rapt moments, the first notes of that glorious jubilee in which we shall take a part. We stand every moment on the verge of that great and unsounded sea. Are we ready to set sail? Are we clothed in the Redeemer's righteousness? Are we actuated by the Redeemer's spirit? Have we the humility of a Christian? Have we the humility of the soldier, the faith of the soldier, the trust of the soldier, recorded in the miracle? How is it that any one, with one foot in eternity and the other in time, not knowing into which section of eternity he is about to plunge, there to be for ever, can remain in such a state for one single day? Let me repeat the blessed truth: Salvation now, this very day, for the guiltiest of us all; instant pardon, glorious, sufficient pardon, through the blood of Jesus, for the chiefest of sinners. My dear friends, God's great grief is, if I may use such language, that we are always suspecting him to be a hard Egyptian task-master, instead of feeling of him, and flying to him, as to our Father. Father, go home, and watch the babe in the mother's bosom, and see where it finds its repose, where its rest and its confidence are; and learn that, great and gifted and celebrated as you may be, it is only when you can become like that little babe, and feel toward God as that infant feels to its mother, that you will be a true, a happy, and exalted Christian.

## LECTURE IV.

## THE DISCIPLES IN THE STORM.

And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.—MATT. xiv. 22-33.

I BEG to introduce the beautiful miracle recorded in the passage I have read by some additional prefatory remarks upon the nature of the miracles of our Lord. I have prefaced every exposition of the successive miracles of Christ by remarks on their nature; and I come now to that point of discussion which is of some importance in the present day, namely, Are miracles still continued in the church? Ought there to be in the visible church, or in any section of it whatever, power to do miracles? And if we see not that power exercised, is it a sign that it has been withdrawn in sovereignty, or is it a proof of the unfaith-

fulness of the church that has shorn her of her prerogative? or is it the mind of God that there should be no miracles in the visible church whatever, and that there is neither a necessity for them, in the circumstances in which we are placed, nor power to do them in those who are either the teachers or the pupils in the church of Christ? It is my conviction, founded upon fact and Scripture, that it is not God's mind that there should be now miracles in the church; that from the nature of the thing it could scarcely have been expected that there should; and that while there is every reason to believe that miracles were required at each successive epoch or stage in the progression of God's purposes, there is no proof that they were meant to be every-day exhibitions by every Christian.

In noticing the miracles of the Old Testament Scripture, you will perceive (and this is presumptive evidence that they were not meant to be always continued) that they cluster around each great crisis, or epoch, or era; they are not spread over the whole dispensation as every-day things, but they seem to cluster into masses, to occur at special intervals, or on specific occasions, when there was a great crisis at which the interposition of omnipotence was necessary; then and there only omnipotence developed itself. For instance, we find that at the establishment of the kingdom by Moses and Joshua miracles were done, because it was the commencement of a new and great era. So at the reformation of the kingdom by Elijah and Elisha, miracles were again exhibited; there was another great change in the progression of God's purposes, a new and more startling development of his mind to mankind at each of these periods.

You will notice now, (and I think this will be a sufficient reply to those persons who allege that it is want of faith or want of Christianity that makes it come to pass that

there are now no miracles,) that the most distinguished saints of the Old Testament Scriptures did no miracles. This alone will be evidence that there may be Christianity without miraculous power. Abraham, "the father of the faithful," did not perform one miracle; yet who can doubt that he was a distinguished Christian? David did not perform a single miracle; miracles were done in his time, but not by him. Daniel performed no miracle; it is true miracles were done around him, and about him, but not by his instrumentality in any sense or shape. And I think it is one of those simple, yet striking and expressive evidences of the Divine origin of the Bible, that it is asserted of John the Baptist, specifically asserted, that he did no miracles. Contrast that one statement with the legends of the canonized saints, as they are called, of the Church of Rome. A Roman Catholic saint without a miracle would be a sun without rays, a star without light, a non-entity, a phenomenon. There is something inimitably grand and beautiful in this, that while of all the pseudo-saints it is constantly said that they did miracles of all sorts, grotesque, extravagant, ridiculous; it is said in simple terms, without assigning any reason, of John the Baptist, that he did no miracles. In looking at past dispensations, then, we have presumptive evidence that miracles were not to be of every-day occurrence, or to be perpetuated always.

There is evidence of this also from analogy. At the commencement of an epoch, or at the first development of a kingdom, or at the creation of a world, you may expect more power to be put forth than at the continuance of it. For instance, the first creation of the world required more power than the continuation of the world does, and more was accordingly developed. The continuance of a race, too, requires perhaps less power than the creation of that

race. So the introduction of God manifested in the flesh was a new epoch, so remarkable, so strange, so unexpected by the mass of mankind, that you might expect on such an occasion and such a crisis there would occur miracles to attest it. What is a miracle? It is just God's omnipotence becoming a pedestal or candlestick on which to plant God's truth; it is omnipotent beneficence coming down from heaven, pointing to a doctrine, or specifying a person, and saying the one is of God, and the other is God manifest in the flesh. Now that at such a crisis a miracle should be done was natural; but when that crisis had passed away, that the miracle should cease is no less natural. When the fruit is ripe, the calyx or the petals that surround it drop away; when the building is well founded and complete, the scaffolding is taken down. It is so with miracles. We have now come to that era when it is not more power that man needs to see, but more grace that man needs to feel.

All miracles, I would notice too, that have been performed, or pretended to be performed, since the apostolic age closed, have been either lying legends, interruptions of God's harmony by Satan himself, or they have been gross, palpable deceptions. Let any one read, for instance, the life of Ignatius Loyola, or St. Francis Xavier, and judge for himself. One of the ways of forming a higher estimate of God's book, is to read any other book pretending to be equal, or to be next to it. The contrast is so vivid and striking that your impression would be more and more confirmed that this is the book of God. Let any one read the life of the Lord of Glory, that simple, sublime biography, which has four penmen, but one grand original to draw from, and then let him read the life of St. Francis Xavier, or Ignatius Loyola, or St. Alphonsus Liguori, or any of the canonized saints of the Church of Rome, draw-

ing each after him a long string of grotesque miracles and wonders—most of them so grotesque that they must make a rational man smile, and a Christian man weep; and he will see at once what wears the impress of God, and what bears the stamp of the lying legends of man. All pretended or false miracles lead you to wonder, to stare, to be amazed; every miracle that Jesus did leads you to see beneficence, to learn truth, to discover that he who preached the one and performed the other, was indeed God manifested in the flesh. The miracles of recent times lead from God; the miracles of Christ lead directly to God. There is, besides, this difference, that the miracles of the New Testament are guardedly alluded to; they are never spoken of as evidence of grace; whereas, if we read the accounts of the miracles performed by Romish saints, we shall see that they are always quoted as evidence of their sanctity. What is the great evidence that a person ought to be canonized in the Church of Rome? That he has done miracles—this is an evidence of his sanctity. Is this the evidence of the Bible that a man is a Christian? The very contrary is its declaration. A man may do many wonderful works, yet Christ may say, “I know him not.” He may speak in tongues, and have not charity. Hence the apostle Paul, indicating the sublime, moral, and spiritual character of Christianity, bids men not to covet great gifts by which they may dazzle, but to “covet the best gifts,” that is, love; for knowledge, in as far as it is inspired, is gone, and power, in as far as it is miraculous, has ceased, but love abideth—“now abideth faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love.” Covet therefore, not the gift which dazzles, and may dazzle you to ruin, but the grace that sanctifies you, and fits you for eternal happiness. It is these latent points in the character of the gospel that bring out its Divine original, and show in the Bible, not a

human composition, bearing all the traces of man's dark character, but a Divine gift, bearing on it the image and superscription of God.

One remark more, before I enter upon the miracle I have read. The continuancy of a miracle is an absurdity. This is shown by what I said about our Lord's turning water into wine. The present law is, that the vine shall be planted, that the rain shall fall, and the sunbeams shine; that it shall grow first into a blossom, and then bear grapes, that these shall be pressed or squeezed, and then fermented and turned into wine. All that Christ did, when he performed the miracle at Cana of Galilee, was to shorten the process. The present process is a long one, requiring twelve months for its completion; Christ merely compressed the twelve months' process into one minute's doing. But suppose that every Christian in this congregation could turn water into wine by simply invoking the name of Jesus; suppose that every man could do it, what would be the result? Philosophers would immediately enter it in their books that this was one of the laws of nature. There is nothing more miraculous in turning water into wine by a word than by means of sunbeams and rain-drops. I question, indeed, if what we call the natural law be not the greater and more striking miracle. But why does the one seem so miraculous? Because it is the unusual thing. If the two were interchanged, and the twelve months' process were to come once in a hundred years, people would say that it was the miracle; and that what we call the miraculous process was the natural one. What was a miracle when done first, would cease to be a miracle by being done every day. The miracle at present would be to raise a dead man to life; but if men were always raised as soon as they had died, it would cease to be so; it would be the natural process, and by becoming a great law, would cease to be the

vivid, startling, emphatic witness, calling man's attention to great truths and solemn facts. You can see, therefore, that the demand for miracles in the church is not scriptural. To those persons who pretend that they can do miracles there is but one answer: "Show the miracle, and then we will believe." It is not what the church should have, or what you say the church has, or what you say you can do, but this is our requirement, do it; a miracle is an appeal to the senses; and if my senses testify that it is no miracle, no pretensions of yours can satisfy me that you have miraculous power. But what is the use of more power at present? "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe if one rose from the dead." There is evidence for the gospel so conclusive that no miracle can strengthen it. Now suppose the case of some thoughtless, heartless person, without fear, without love, fearing neither God nor man; suppose some spirit, a departed relative, were to rise from the dead, and appear to him, and reason, in the sepulchral tones of the grave, of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment; of the torments of the lost, of the joys of the saved; that person's hair would stand on end, his heart would multiply its beatings, his whole system would be depressed; he would be startled in the morning, and begin to pray if he never prayed before; he would begin to feel, to think, to fear, to be alarmed, to inquire about what he was to do to be saved; but day after day the impression would grow weaker, and at last, when he had got fairly into the world again, and the first sharp impression had been blunted, he would begin to say, "Well, I believed it was so and so that appeared to me; I wonder if it was; was it a *delusio visus* after all? It may have been something I had eaten that disagreed with me, the nightmare—some strange fancy that went across my mind; perhaps it was no miracle after all." So

it would be in every instance, men would feel awed while the miracle lasted ; they would return again to their follies when the miracle had ceased to make its impression. We do not want power. I would not be a convert to Christianity by any power that could be made to exert its pressure upon me. Ruined as my soul is, it must be won, not driven ; and weak as my understanding is, it must be convinced, not taken by storm ; and poor as my heart is, it must be made to love, or it will not beat in unison with God's mind at all. Therefore, I want no miraculous power to awe me, to terrify me, to force me ; I want to see love manifested in Christ, that I may love him who loved me ; I want to read this blessed book, and study it, and meditate on it, and to come to the conviction upon clear grounds, upon conclusive evidence, that it is God's book ; and then I shall be willing, in the day of God's power, to be saved, not against my will, but in the full exercise of all my faculties and powers.

So far, then, I have proceeded in examining recent miracles, and contrasting them with those of the New Testament. Let us now turn our attention to the beautiful miracle recorded in the 14th chapter of Matthew.

Its facts are so plain that nobody can mistake them ; few need them to be explained. There are often passages in the Bible so exquisitely beautiful and simple, that I have no doubt men of taste sometimes say to themselves, as they hear or read my attempts to explain them, "I wish you would let that alone ; it is your touching it that weakens it ; trying to explain it deteriorates it ; it is so simple, so expressive in its lonely grandeur, that it speaks with the greatest power when it is left to speak alone." Still there are lessons we may draw from it ; without explaining the outward miracle, we may draw lessons from it instructive to us in our inner experience.

It is said that Jesus *constrained* his disciples to go into the ship. I look upon the ship as a type, a symbol of the whole church—the true church of Christ ; I look upon the disciples in it as a great symbol of Christ's people in this world ; and I look upon Christ's walking on the waves, and coming to still the storm, as a lesson instructive and comforting to us. We notice, that Jesus constrained his disciples to go into the ship, which was overtaken by the storm. We are never to run into affliction unsent ; it is as sinful to run into affliction that we have no business with, as it is to run from affliction into which God has sent us.

While the disciples went into the ship, how was Christ engaged ? He was praying on a mountain-side apart. While Christ's people suffer, whatever that suffering be, Christ himself has not forgotten them, but is pleading and interceding for them on that loftier mount where he makes intercession for all who come to God through him.

It was after the disciples had seen the miracle of the loaves and fishes, that Jesus sent them forth to this stormy and tempestuous voyage. Have we not in this an illustration of Christ's dealings with his people still ? He never sends his people into the furnace till, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he has strengthened them to bear it. He does not send them to suffer trials till he has first shown what his power and sympathy are. He fed them miraculously with loaves and fishes before he sent them to encounter the storms and waves of an angry and tempestuous sea. We thus learn this blessed lesson—that no Christian goes a warfare at his own charges, that God will give him strength, if he seek it, for his journey, that he will give him the element of victory for the battle, that he will first manifest to him the riches of his grace. He will then send him into trouble in order to test his confidence and trust in him.

I may notice another interesting fact. It is, that Christ

always proportions his trials to the strength and progress of his people. I might illustrate this by referring to the 8th chapter of Matthew, where another storm is spoken of, which I shall notice on a subsequent occasion. In the 8th chapter of Matthew it was a tempest merely ; here it was a tempest *contrary* to them. In the first storm, Christ was in the ship, though asleep ; here he was not in the ship. In the first storm it was daylight ; here it was darkness. In the first they were near the shore ; here they were afar off. In the one, Christ was with them ; here, in the other, it was their complaint that Jesus was not yet come. So we learn that Christ does not send his people into a heavier storm till he has accustomed them to a lighter one, that as they grow in strength he increases the burdens which Christians have to bear. And is it not well that it is so ? The question is sometimes asked—What would you do if persecution were to come, and you were called upon to die at the stake rather than surrender your religion ? The answer is, It is not what you feel now that is to be the test of what you are, but what you will do then. When God suffers martyr times to be, he gives martyr strength to his people to go through them ; God fits his people for the crisis—“As their day is, so shall their strength be.” We are not to speculate how we shall get through this and how we shall get through that, judging from our present strength how to meet our future trials ; but our right course is to trust in the Lord, knowing that “My grace is sufficient for you. As thy day is, thy strength shall be.” What a childlike position is this, and what a delightful one—that we are not to speculate about the future at all, but to see that we now trust implicitly in our Father !

I may notice, too, from this storm, that trials and afflictions are always the lot of the people of God. He is not the worst Christian who has most trials, but, if one may

judge at all, he who has fewest. "Through much tribulation," says the apostle, "ye must enter into the kingdom of heaven." "In the world," says our Lord, "ye shall have tribulation." This is the great law. When persons are in affliction, therefore, they should not think it strange, "as though some strange thing had happened unto them," but feel that it is the path, the journey, the road, the career, chalked out for them. It is as necessary that you should lose that money, that health, encounter that trial, and buffet that storm, as it is that Christ should die for you, and that you should believe on him. Then this blessed truth will always comfort—the wave that reaches the highest only lifts the ship nearest to the sky; the wind that blows the fiercest only wafts that ship more speedily to the shore; and the lightning that cleaves the skies and rends the atmosphere serves only to light God's ark to that glorious haven where it shall rest under his shadow, and in the enjoyment of perpetual peace.

While the disciples were buffeting the storm, Jesus was praying for them on a hill-side unknown to them. What, we may ask under this head, is it that Christ prays for his people when they are in affliction? No doubt it is first, as he himself has indicated, that their faith fail not. "Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." I think there is something exquisitely beautiful in this, that Christ does not wait till we are in trouble, and then pray for us; but that he prays for us first, and afterward we are placed in trouble: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, before Satan hath got liberty to sift thee as wheat." As long as faith remains, let the storm be never so severe, this faith is still "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," the victory, therefore, that overcometh the

world. I can also well conceive that when Christ intercedes for his people in trouble, it is that their sins may be forgiven. There is no storm where there is not sin ; there is no storm in which there is not a Jonah ; there is a reason for it ; there is a why and a wherefore ; and if we are Christ's people, it will be his intercessory prayer that our sins, which have brought the affliction, may be blotted out, and then the affliction will be either removed, or will be made the chariot that wafts us more speedily to glory, and honour, and immortality. I can conceive that another subject of Christ's intercessory prayer is that the affliction, whatever it is, may be sanctified. Of all dreadful judgments, unsanctified afflictions are the worst. Those persons who are made to think and feel seriously under great losses, and then by-and-by think as they did before, have come under only more dreadful judgments ; their hearts have become more hardened, and their prospects of feeling the power of the gospel are fainter and fewer. Another part, I conceive, of Christ's intercessory prayer must be that we may not, in affliction, use unlawful means to get out of it. When persons are in sore perplexity, in circumstances of great pecuniary embarrassment, how many are the temptations in the commercial world to do something sinful, something unjust, dishonest, rash, something altogether unchristian, in order to escape from the present overwhelming pressure. If we are Christ's people, he will pray for us that we may patiently wait, that we may constantly trust, that we may never have recourse to any thing he has forbidden, in order to escape from the trial in which he has placed us. Such then we may suppose to be the substance of Christ's intercessory prayer for his people in the midst of affliction.

You may notice another peculiarity here. It is said that the disciples, in the midst of the storm, rowed onward till

the fourth watch of the night. What does this teach us ? That duties are ours in all circumstances, however difficult, however trying, or perplexing. You cannot be placed in any illness where it is not your duty to get the best advice in your power ; you cannot be plunged into any perplexity in which it is not your duty to use every available element to escape from it. It is a law in God's providential dealings, that those who do not help themselves in such matters he will not help. Means and duties are ours, the issue and the glory of our deliverance will be exclusively God's.

It is worthy of notice that the disciples here did not pray—we do not hear that they did so. Perhaps they were too overwhelmed for prayer ; yet Christ came to them. He does not forget us when we forget him ; he does not fail to intercede for us when we cease to look to him. If his interest in us were always contingent on our felt interest in him, few indeed and far between would be the saved. But, blessed be his name, often as we forget him he forgets not us ; he restores our souls, brings us back by his chastisement, and preserves us through his might and to his glory. How consolatory is this !

We read that when Christ came to them, he came walking on the waves. Moses went through the channels of a divided sea ; Christ marched upon the bosom of the undivided sea, turning its waves into a pavement, and its waters into a promenade, indicating that the Land-lord and the Sea-lord of the universe was present there, and that nature felt that he was so. Does not this teach us that just as the waves of the sea were under Christ's feet, so all difficulties, all trials, all that his people fear, are under his feet still. Sin, death, and Satan are under Christ's feet ; they are conquered foes ; death has been denuded of its sting, the grave of its victory. Satan's head is bruised ;

all are under Christ's power, trodden down as the pathway on which he marches to deliver, not standing up as obstructions to prevent his approach to us.

While his disciples were placed in great trial, indeed almost despairing, yet the glory of their deliverance made them forget all their past sorrow and trial. So will it be with Christ's people still. Their deliverance will be so glorious that they will think nothing of the storm through which they have passed; the better land will be so beautiful that they will wonder that they did not wish to reach it long ago. "I reckon," says the apostle—one who had been in perils by sea, and in perils by land, and had been also in the third heaven—"I reckon," he says, from experience, not from theory, "that the afflictions of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed."

Another instructive feature of the miracle is, the time when Christ came to deliver his disciples. The ancient division of the night was into three watches, but here the Roman division is adopted, which was into four. Christ allows them to struggle in the storm, to get only half across the sea; and then he came to them at the fourth watch, about three o'clock in the morning. They had struggled from six o'clock the previous evening, and had made but little way. Was that late hour the best time for him to come? It was: he came at the moment when it was most for his glory, and best for their good. If he had come earlier, they would not have felt that their means were exhausted, and that human strength was weakness; if he had waited, and come later, they would have been plunged into despair, or overwhelmed. He came at the moment when man's extremity was God's opportunity, and man's deliverance was God's glory. And so it will be in all the afflictions of his own people. I have noticed in

another part of my exposition that they used means. “Toiling and rowing” is the language of one of the evangelists. I have said that it is our duty in affliction, whatever the affliction be, to use such means as God has put in our power. If Christ were God only, he would not sanction the use of means; if Christ were man only, he would use nothing but means; but because he is God and man, he uses the means, and gives the blessing in the use of them; and oftener is his glory more developed in blessing means which are feeble than in working against means that are strong, or without means altogether. The blowing of horns led to the downfall of Jericho—means very inadequate, yet means. Gideon’s lamps led to the victory of the three hundred men—means, yet seemingly very worthless. The apostles triumphed by means that looked very insignificant in comparison with the grandeur of the world around them. Sense pronounces means to be inadequate; faith will not idolize them, but will use the means, and look to God for the blessing. What will you do, when there are no means left, when you are in such trouble, in such affliction, in such overwhelming depression, that there is no way of escape upon the right hand nor upon the left, when there is nothing that you can do? You are just to do as God told his people to do before. The Israelites said, when Pharaoh was behind them and the Red Sea before them, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord which he will show to you to-day;” and the sea

divided, and left a path across its mighty waters. And so should it be with us. When you are in such tribulation that you can see no possibility of escape, in such perplexity that you do not know how to get out of it, then is the time to stand still; not to stand still, and look at your own shadow, or trust in your own wisdom, but stand still, and learn, and pray, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you.

In the next place, when Christ comes to his people, how often do his people mistake him! It is said here, that when Jesus went to his disciples in the fourth watch of the night, they "saw him walking on the sea, and were troubled, saying, It is a spirit." The Jews had a popular belief, that the spirits of the dead visited their relatives long after death; and in this instance they thought a spirit of some departed one was coming to them. Why did they misapprehend it? They had known, and seen, and heard Jesus before. When people are in very great trouble, they generally look at what way they think it possible for them to escape, and if they do not see deliverance coming in that one way, they leap to the conclusion that there is no escape at all. These poor disciples thought there was but one way of escape from the storm—that was to reach the other side; and when Christ came to deliver them by a new and unexpected way, they misapprehended him, and forgot what he had said of himself—that his way is in the whirlwind, and his path in the great waters, that his ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. But there is another reason: when there is sin in the conscience there is always disturbance in the heart, and misapprehension in the eye. What is it that makes cowards of us all? Sin within us; and whenever affliction comes to a man who lives in sin, as sure as that man lives he will see his sin in the affliction; and even when deliverance is come, he is so

convinced of his demerit that that deliverance he misconstrues, and believes it to be only a more desolating form of the deserved judgments of God. So with these poor disciples. They were conscious of great sins, and when the deliverer came they looked at him through the medium of those sins, and expected only a destroyer. Thus it is said, "they were afraid."

But how beautifully does our Lord reply to them! "It is I, be not afraid." That voice which sounded so musical upon the streets of Jerusalem—which had spoken such words of power, in turning a few loaves into many—which had been sweeter than a mother's to her first-born one—that voice rose, and rang out its own peculiar melody amid the roar of the winds and the noise of the sea-waves, and carried consolation to their drooping hearts—"It is I, be not afraid." Their sorrow was instantly turned into joy, their faith into absolute assurance; and they were perfectly happy. But there is more than this. Strange it is that we need not only to know doctrines, but we need grace to enable us to make suitable deductions from them. Many people pride themselves on their reason, others on their memory, others on their imagination; but, in dealing with God's word, all three will go wrong if not guided by God's Spirit. The inference, for instance, of one man, from the fact of the shortness of life, the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of the epoch of it, is, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Here is a false conclusion from true premises. The believer draws a right conclusion from the same premises when he says, "Therefore, let us weep as though we wept not, marry as though we married not, rejoice as though we rejoiced not, using the world as not abusing it, for the fashion of it passeth away." So when Christ here spoke so beautifully amid the sea-waves, and to the tossed and tempest-struck ship, "It

is I;" if he had said nothing more, they would have said, "He is come to sink us to the bottom of the sea." He therefore helps their reason to draw a right conclusion, as well as informs their understanding of the right doctrine: "It is I," *therefore*, he says, "be not afraid." There is something very beautiful and very delightful in this to a Christian: "It is I, be not afraid." Wherever Christ is, there fear is an unnatural thing; wherever Christianity is, there "not afraid" is the legitimate conclusion; wherever God's grace is in the heart, that heart ought to bound with present or expected joy. Hence, as I have repeatedly said, the more we see and know the Saviour the more happy we shall be. Christianity is good news. The voice, "It is I," is the key-note of a thousand hymns of joy, and gratitude, and thanksgiving, and praise. Wherever Christ is, there is peace and happiness.

Now, my dear friends, are you placed in circumstances of trial, circumstances of dire and overwhelming affliction, or distress of any kind! Hear, in the depth of it, a still, small, but beautiful voice, "It is I, be not afraid." Are you in sickness, under the wasting ravages of disease, anticipating a grave rather than a cure? Are you pained and overwhelmed by a sense of what is before you—by the sufferings that are within you? Dear brethren, it is not chance, it is not accident, it is not a random occurrence, to be explained by secondary causes. Hear, in the midst of that sickness, around that sick-bed, the blessed truth, "It is I, be not afraid." Are you mourning and deplored the loss of those that are near and dear to you? Hark! there is sounding from the grave in which you deposit their dead dust, "It is I;" and read upon that tombstone, in the coming fore-light of the resurrection morning, "Be not afraid." When that day comes, then a new voice shall pierce the heights and depths of the universe, and shall

ring, as with trumpet-sound, through the homes of the living and the sepulchres of the dead; and when the dead dust, gathering together from every nook, and cranny, and corner of the wide world, and becoming animate and vocal, shall shout, "We come, we come," responsive to the terrible summons—then, brethren, it is "I" that summons you to the first resurrection; it is "Be not afraid" that is the utterance of him who is to be your Judge. And this shall be your memorial, or rather your new song, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first resurrection." Here, then, is the secret of all peace, the spring of all happiness, to know that Christ is in the trouble, that Christ has sent the trial, and that he is overruling it for his glory.

We read that the disciples received Jesus into the ship, (I do not touch upon Peter walking on the waters,) and immediately the wind ceased. What is the secret of happiness then? Christ in the heart. It is when Christ is in the heart its life, when Christ is in the conscience its legislator, when Christ is in the understanding its light, that harmony takes the place of discord, sunshine of cloud, and happiness of misery and wo. You may rest assured of this, all experience is proving it, all facts attest it, that there is no such thing as happiness by any mechanical arrangements we can make; it can only be secured by a living possession of the living Christ in the hearts of believers. Christ in the heart will give peace; Christ in the home will light it up with new radiance; Christ in a nation will give its throne new stability, and its people new peace; and Christ in the wide world will diffuse around a millennium, just as the sun shoots around him rays of heat and glory.

I must add, that this stilling of the storm was, on Christ's part, an earnest of that universal calm which will be when he whose right it is will come. I have noticed, I think, before, this interesting feature in all the miracles of Christ

—that they are essentially redemptive in their character. I explained that every miracle that Christ did was, not like Loyola's, or Xavier's, or Liguori's, a wild, arbitrary display of power, but one of the fore-lights of the restoration of all things, an earnest of what shall be. When he healed the sick, for instance, that was an earnest and a fore-taste of a sickless state; when he stilled the waves and the storm, it was an earnest of the perfect calm that shall be; and when he raised the dead, it was the first-fruits of the first resurrection. And I may notice this most interesting fact, that, just in proportion as men grow Christ-like in character, they become Christ-like in power. I believe that greater skill in medicine, greater attainments in science, greater loyalty among our people, are all associated by an indissoluble law with greater grace in men's hearts. It is in the most Christian lands that famine is the least felt, and that the few loaves are multiplied most into the many. It is in Christian lands, too, that man gains the greatest supremacy over nature around him. What monarch rules the waves? The monarch that rules by the grace of God—“*Dei gratiâ*,” as the humblest of our coins tell. What monarch is admiral of the seas? The monarch that is most Christian. In proportion as Christianity spreads, you see medical skill, military power, (as far as it is defensive,) naval power, scientific knowledge, spreading too. The fact is, Christianity is a glorious tree; and science and literature and power are the parasite plants, that twine around it, draw their nutriment from it, depend for support and endurance on it. This is a most delightful fact, that just as a country becomes Christian, that country excels in lordship over disease, over sea, and land, and science, and literature, and philosophy. If you were now to institute a comparison between the nations of the earth, you would find that the land that has most Christian light in it,

has the most science, literature, philosophy, poetry, and genius in it too. I believe medicine is a science constantly progressing; and I have no doubt that, as we become more Christian, there will be more control over disease. I look upon the discovery of vaccination as only a shadow of the great fact of Christ's healing diseases; and upon every brilliant discovery in medicine, (and many brilliant ones have been made lately,) as a fore-light of that day when there shall be no sickness, nor death, nor any more sin. I believe there is a deeper and more intimate connection, underlying what we see, between grace in the heart and light in the intellect, and power over all that is around us, than many generally suppose. If this lesson could be impressed upon us—that they that are richest in grace shall be mightiest also in power—we might gain, perhaps, another step toward that glorious consummation when Christ shall reign in every heart, and be all and in all.

The result of this miracle was that the disciples worshipped Christ. That should be the result of its study to us. Have you been delivered from affliction? Worship Christ. Have you been prospered in the world? Worship Christ. Have you escaped a watery grave? Have you been saved in a railway accident? Have you been spared in circumstances of imminent danger? Have you been recovered from disease? Be thankful for the physician's skill, for the medicine's power; but look beyond the physician, and above the medicine, and, like the disciples who were delivered from the storm, worship Jesus.

## LECTURE V.

## THE SORROWING SISTERS.

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judca again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off; and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yes, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.—JOHN xi. 1-46.

I HAVE read what may seem a long, but what must appear to you all a beautiful, account of one of the greatest and most impressive miracles wrought by our Lord, namely, the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. It will be impossible to enter upon the part which is strictly the accomplishment of the miracle in this lecture. It will be sufficient to dwell upon some of those exquisite touches of true poetry, of deep sentiment, of instructive religion which immediately precede the actual miracle. Often what accompanies the miracle is as beautiful and impressive as the miracle itself; for, in the whole history of Jesus, each act of power is set and embosomed in many acts of good-

ness, like the full ripe fruit amid the leaves and petals that surround it. We may enjoy the fragrance of the last before we gather and feed upon the preciousness of the first.

In looking at what is recorded as introductory to the immediate miracle, we find one great fact: first, that suffering is the lot of all: there is no exception. Sorrow enters the heart that is bounding, and death smites the heart that is breaking: there is none exempt. God's people and they that are not are subject to suffering. We may not trace out who are the Lord's people by their outward sufferings; we can only trace this by their inward and moral character. Often the greatest sufferer is the greatest saint. Frequently God's hand lies the heaviest where God's heart overflows the most with beneficence, sympathy, and love.

Let us notice where this miracle was done. It was in a town called Bethany, but it is distinguished by one characteristic feature; it was the town of Mary and her sister Martha. There is something beautiful in this allusion. I have no doubt that Bethany had given birth to some heroes, poets, statesmen, philosophers; and that if you had asked some rabbi what was the greatest glory of Bethany, he would have pointed to some tall tapering spire, some exquisite specimen of architectural grandeur, or he would have unfolded the page that contains the name of some great poet who was born in it, or illustrious hero who bled and suffered for his country. But these characteristics are all restricted to this world. The sounds of the fame of heroes, poets, and philosophers, are spent before they reach the skies, but the sigh of the broken heart is heard in heaven louder than the seven thunders; the simple petition of a contrite spirit rises to God swifter than an angel's wings can clip, and rises higher than an archangel's pinions can

soar. In the light of heaven what we call great things are pressed into little space, and what man calls little things are seen to be mighty because moral, and associated with the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. So here the only trace in the history of Bethany that had its reflection beside God's throne was this: that two Christian females were natives of it. It was not the town of the hero, the statesman, the poet, but the town of Mary and her sister Martha. These two fair, fragrant, and fragile flowers were in the sight of God the fairest things in Bethany. But the eye of man does not see it so, and the ear of man does not hear it so. It needed Christianity to teach us what is one of the most eloquent lessons on its glorious page: that physical grandeur, even when it is sublimest, is mean and poor, and that moral glory is alone great and enduring. These two living temples were more glorious than the temple of Jerusalem. These two obscure saints gave a character to the town where heroes' exploits and poets' hymns are unnoticed and unknown, and where alone it is important to be either noticed or known. Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha! May it not be so still? We speak of London as distinguished for the birth of many great ones; we refer to Edinburgh, or Dublin, or Paris, as illustrious for some other great fact or feature; but perhaps these great cities, when spoken of in the language of the ransomed that are about the throne, are quoted as distinguished by facts that have no credit in the newspaper column, and no eclat in the parliaments of this world, but which alone, amid all that seems magnificent in the history of those capitals, are recollected and mooted in heaven in glory.

It is said that it was "that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick." This record seems the fulfil-

ment of what is expressly stated in one of the previous Gospels. It is said of this very Mary, in the 26th of Matthew, "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." How very striking is this! Who would have ventured to give this prophecy? Were some person in this congregation to do some deed of Christian beneficence, and were I to say, Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the whole world this fact shall be mentioned, men would smile incredulously at my enthusiasm, and all would feel that it was extremely improbable that my prediction would be fulfilled. Well, Jesus had here no outward glory, nothing that could impress the senses of mankind, and yet he enunciates it as an absolute prediction, not a probable conjecture, that wheresoever the gospel should be preached throughout the whole world, there this act of Christian sympathy should be recorded. It is now recorded in John, it sounds from every pulpit, it is contained in every Bible; the prophecy has swelled into absolute and universal performance. We see that Jesus knew the end and the beginning, and the impression becomes not more deep, but more transparent, that Jesus is what he professed to be, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

But by whom was this act of beneficence recorded? Not by Mary herself. It is one thing to sound one's own fame; it is another to let others do it: it may be right in others to do it; it would be wrong in ourselves. And yet there is a distinction. Some are so sensitive that they are literally afraid that the left hand should know what the right hand doeth. It is possible to err in that direction. Others are so vain-glorious that they cannot give a guinea without having an advertisement to announce it. It is possible to hit what is neither the one nor the other; to let our good

deeds "so shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify"—not us—there is the difference, not us, but "our Father which is in heaven." He that does the act from the right motive, and makes known the act from the same motive, does what is Christian in both. And it is important that men should know, and be made to feel, that wherever God's grace subdues the heart, there the hand that was clenched is relaxed; the soul that was narrow is enlarged, and man feels, for the first time in his experience, that God's grace has made him a saint, and that that saintship should lead him to be instantly a servant.

Let me notice another feature here. When Lazarus was sick, sharing in the common calamity of his kind, and Mary and Martha saw and deplored his sufferings, they did what is a precedent for us to do in kindred or analogous circumstances. "Therefore," in the third verse it is said, "his sisters sent unto Jesus, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." What they did physically we may do as really, but spiritually, and it is not true that they could draw closer to Jesus when he walked the streets of Bethany, than we can do living in the midst of a great city. He is near to the humble heart as he was to Mary in Bethany. The arm that raised the dead from his slumbers is not paralyzed. The voice that rang through the chambers of the grave is not hushed. Jesus is still equally near, is armed with the same power; and, blessed be his name, his heart overflows with the same tender and touching sympathy. Sisters, when your brother is sick, parents, when your dear babes are ill, you go, and it is right you should go, and ask the physician of the greatest skill and the greatest experience to help you. The means are yours, and the man who undervalues or despises the means, undervalues and despises the ordinances of God. But when you thus have recourse to the physician that may err, and to the medicines

that may fail, let me ask if you have recourse to that Physician who sends the sickness, fixes the hour of its continuance, and has resolved what shall be the glorious end to which that sickness shall contribute? Strange that we should try all the cisterns of man, and never think of having recourse to the fountain of Deity. And yet, my dear friends, I believe that we may ask of God, when we need them, temporal blessings just as freely as we may ask spiritual blessings. Does not Jesus himself set the example, when he said, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?” Is there some mother whose babe is in the agonies of death? May not that mother say, “Blessed Saviour, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. This frail but beautiful blossom thou hast given me I would tend a little longer; this beloved and dear one I would cherish in my bosom a few years more. Lord, spare it, if it be thy will?” Who will forbid her thus to pray? Not Jesus; for he taught us so to pray: “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not my will, but thy will be done.” These sisters so felt, for they addressed the Saviour in the language that indicated the want that was nearest, deepest, dearest. “Therefore his sisters sent unto Jesus, saying, Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

Notice another touching trait in this. I fancy if I had been one of the train that went to Jesus for relief, and if the relative had been mine, in my ignorance I would have said, “Lord, he who has done much to make known thy name—he who has suffered much for thy sake—he who loves thee most truly, dearly, deeply, is sick;” and I should have thought, in my ignorance, that to plead what he had suffered and done for Jesus would have been the straight way to get Jesus to relieve the suffering. That would have been human; but Mary was taught by him who was the true teacher, to press another motive, to present another

plea, far more eloquent and effective than that which I have mentioned. The sisters did not say, "He who loves thee"—but, "He whom thou lovest is sick." What is the great basis of all our appeals to Christ? Not our love to him, but his love to us. Our love to him is too frail, and evanescent, and flickering, to be the basis for petition; but his love toward us—that, like some of those springs amid the blue hills of the north, is much too deep ever to be frozen by winter's cold, and too overlapped and overshadowed by surrounding crags to be evaporated by the summer's heat—that love which loved us from the first, and loves us to the last, and flows with undiminished stream—is the basis on which we can stand—the strong plea that we can present. Mary knew what we know, that to touch that spring was to touch a chord that vibrated in the Saviour's heart, and awoke the sympathy that was deepest, in behalf of her sick and suffering brother—"He whom thou lovest is sick." This was her most successful plea.

She did not say, "Lord, come and help him." This omission is very fine. The thoughts that underlie every simple remark in this chapter are rich and full, and give evidence that no ordinary teaching was here. She does not say, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick, do come and cure him;" but she felt that the simple intimation "he is sick," and a plea and a statement based upon the great fact that Christ loved him, was all that was required: "He whom thou lovest is sick; I leave that fact with thee, blessed Jesus; thou knowest what is best; it rests with thee to carry that sickness to its issue, an issue that shall glorify thy name, and do good and occasion happiness to me and my brother."

There is yet another trait. Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, were bosom friends of Jesus—for Jesus, let us never forget, was a man. I believe our great fault in modern

times is, that we so think of Jesus as God, that we do not sufficiently think of him as a man; but it is just as important that we should feel the truth of his real, but infinitely sinless humanity, as that we should feel the truth of his real, glorious, and eternal divinity. Now Jesus was a man. What I love that is pure he could love. He had his friends —his bosom friends. There is not a sympathy that nestles in the heart of a saint, that Jesus had not in all its purity; there is not a sorrow that hangs like a cloud over the broken and wounded spirit of a believer, that Jesus had not hanging over his; there is not one pang we are conscious of, sin excepted, which had not its echo, and has not its echo still, in the bosom of our great High-Priest; “for we have not a High-Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Mary, knowing that Jesus was a friend, might have said, “*My brother Lazarus is sick.*” If you recollect, Mary sat at his feet, and Martha ministered unto him; and theirs was the home he frequently went to. She might, then, have argued, “My brother is sick; I know thou lovest him, and that therefore, for my sake, thou wilt come and heal my brother.” But she did not say so. She had renounced what we need to renounce—our own self, our good self, our righteous self, our honest self, our family self; and to feel that in us there is no fulcrum on which we can lay the stress of that lever which will lift our wants to God, and, retracing its arc, bring down blessings from his throne. Never shall we rise to the loftiest dignity till we feel that we have been sunk to the deepest humiliation and abasement. It is the humble that God exalts; it is the hungry that God sends not empty away.

This home of Mary and Martha was the home where Jesus was in the habit of resting his wearied frame, and

seeking that refreshment and finding that hospitality which was as needful to strengthen him for the toils of the week, as it is needful to strengthen us. Weariness, and hunger, and thirst were his, and he never supplied the demand of any of them by a miracle while ordinary means were adequate to do so. One would have thought that if there was but one home, and that home in Bethany, where that aching head could rest, and that grieved and wearied heart could beat in stillness—one would have thought that if there was one home upon earth that would be overshadowed with the all-encompassing pinions of God—if there was one hearth in Palestine whose flame would never be shaded, and around which home-born joys, like swallows, would nestle amid the rafters, and flutter perpetually—that if there was one abode upon earth where no sickness should pierce, no wants be felt, and death himself should be an exile, it would have been that home in Bethany where Jesus went so often, and whose inmates and tenantry were the friends of his bosom, and the ministers continually to his wants. But into that home sickness did enter. But here even is felt a difference—sickness enters the unconverted man's home armed with wrath; it enters the Christian's home winged with mercy and love. The issue of the sickness showed that what was felt to be pain was sent in love, for it ended in greater glory to Jesus, and in greater happiness to them all.

But it teaches us also this lesson—not to judge of men's characters by what betides them. You hear of some frightful catastrophe that falls upon a home, or a nation, or a capital, and you pronounce that home, that nation, that capital, to have great crimes. You do wrong. You are not to say that it was more guilty than we. “Think ye that those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell were

sinners above all men. I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Notice, in the next place, from the fourth verse of this chapter, the end which underlies all the dispensations of God, the great end he has in view in sending them. "When Jesus heard that, he said, This is not a sickness unto death, (that is, final death,) but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Sometimes you see in families afflictions which you cannot explain. You see in one the firstborn cut down by a stroke; in another, trouble follow upon the footsteps of trouble, till all God's waves and billows seem to go over it—the father a Christian, the mother a Christian, the home holy, their exercises Christian, their deeds beneficent, and yet all of them the subjects of unprecedented and consuming suffering. You do not know what to make of it; you cannot understand it; but there is an end we cannot see—the suffering is "for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." A Scottish Christian ought to recollect the first part of his catechism, "Man's chief end is to glorify God," the most magnificent definition that I know, "and then to enjoy him for ever." We must be thankful; we must acquiesce, and feel that if our health fails to give God glory, it is well that our sickness does; if our prosperity does not give him glory, it is well that our losses and our adversity do. We are here to be ministers of his glory. May he afflict us or prosper us; but may he glorify his own name, that his Son may be glorified thereby! Very beautifully does Mr. Evans say, in a book which I would recommend to you, the fragments of his preaching or of his ministry, I forget the precise title, "O Lord, fashion me, polish me, cut me, any way that thou pleasest; but by me glorify thyself!"

The remark of Jesus must have satisfied Mary of his

omniscience, his sympathy, and knowledge ; for if a physician is called in to you, if he understands the disease, and shows that he understands it, your confidence in him is increased. When Mary applied to Jesus, and when Jesus told her the nature of the disease, the issue and the results of it also, her confidence in him must have been complete. Christ sees the disease of every soul ; he understands the “sin that doth most easily beset us ;” he penetrates all vails, goes through every prejudice, disentangles every passion, and detects where the sin is that is the cause of our defalcation, where the disease is that blights and withers our Christianity at the very root. Is it no consolation to feel that Christ knows what we are, what is best for us, and the prescription that will cure us ? You may rest assured, that when you are visited with losses, trials, afflictions, bereavements, that it is as necessary (some may doubt this ; it is easily stated, but very difficult to feel) that you, parent, should have lost that son, that you, son, should have lost that parent, as that Christ should come from heaven and die upon the cross for you. There is a “needs-be” in the calamity that is sorest ; there is an absolute necessity in the blow that strikes the heaviest. This is consolatory. But remember who it is that strikes the blow. The hand that was nailed to the cross will never strike in wrath, but only in love, in sympathy, and in mercy. Thus, then, both sisters were assured that the sickness was “for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

We read in the fifth and sixth verses, “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.” This seems to startle us. It seems like a disappointment, and at the first blush it appears like cruelty, that knowing that the friend whom he

loved was sick, and feeling that the hand that he had but to stretch out could cure him, and hearing these sisters, whom he also loved, pleading for him, that he abode "two days in the same place where he was," as if his heart had lost its sensibility, as if his ear had become heavy, and his arm shortened that it could not save. How do we explain this? By our own experience. You are placed in affliction, and you pray that it may be removed. Day dawns on day, and the sickness still gnaws the heart, wastes the strength, consumes our beauty like a moth, and we fancy that Christ does not hear, that God has forsaken us, and that our God has forgotten us. You mistake; Christ does not say that he will answer the first petition. "Seek," he says, "and ye shall find;" but continue, "ask, and ye shall obtain;" and continue still, "knock, and it shall be opened to you." He has promised an answer, but the when, and the where, and the how, his own wisdom and love will determine. So here he had promised that the sickness should not be "unto death," but that it should be "for the glory of God;" yet he tarries two days, and does not come to deliver. Our affliction deepens, our sufferings grow heavier, the cloud becomes blacker, we pray for mitigation, we ask for healing, for mercy, for sympathy, for interposition. All is still, but the cure is being prepared; the voice is about to utter, "Come forth;" and what seems delay is only a momentary suspension of the relief that is needed, in order to nourish and strengthen our faith, and increase our confidence and hopes in waiting for the Lord.

Beautifully it is said in another part, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Lazarus was dead, but he says still, "*Our friend Lazarus.*" Death snatches the protégé from his protector, the child from the parent, the parent from the child, friend

from friend, brother from brother, but even death cannot sunder the tie that knits the meanest saint to the Lord of glory. It is true of the slumbering dust of a saint, that it belongs to the friend of Jesus. The mother upon earth, whose child is in heaven, can still say, "*My babe sleepeth*"; and the child on earth, whose parent is beyond the skies, can say, "*My parent*," still. Those ties outlast the grave; they receive new strength, and are covered with a new glory before the throne. The church in heaven is not another and different body from the church on earth; they constitute one glorious community—the one militant, the other triumphant; the one drinking from the fountain, the other from the river that flows from that fountain, which is in the throne of God and the Lamb. "*Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.*"

This symbol is used to denote that which of all things we dread and deprecate—death. He calls death a sleep. Now I do think (and I have often said so) that of all unnatural things, of all things that are repulsive, of all things that are most abhorrent to our feelings, death is the most so. Man was never made to die; he was never meant to die. No! death is not God's creation, but sin's doing. Sin is not God's making; whoever made it, or from whatever quarter it came, God made not sin; it is a blot upon his workmanship; it is the jar in the harmony of the universe; it is a stain upon what was made good, and bright, and beautiful. Death is not God's child, but sin's; and it is right that we should hate and dislike it, and shrink from it. But when touched by the cross, and the sin that is the parent of it is forgiven, death, which is the child, is transformed from being the executioner that drags the culprit to his punishment, into the minister that leads and guides the believer to his happy and his lasting home. Hence the Christian's death is called by the beautiful epithet "*sleep.*"

This is not a new one. We read, that “them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;” “I would not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep.” It is a favourite expression, and an expression that is peculiar, in all the riches of its meaning, to Christianity itself. I have no doubt, that to the aged man who is the child of God, and who falls asleep in Jesus, death is no suffering. It is a glorious spirit, that has laid aside the shackles of mortality that it might unfurl its bright wing, (and it was the splendour of the departing wing that told us an angel had been with us;) it is only the removal of the restraints that kept it to the earth, that it might soar until it should sing among the seraphim beside the throne of God. The part that is the man, is not that which you see; we are so much the creatures of sense, that we see certain features and hear certain tones, and we say, “These make up the man;” and when he is gathered to his grave, we say our friend is gone. It is not so. What is the body? It is no more to the soul than the instrument is to the musician. God has placed me in this material world—and I need something to enable me to come into contact with it; I need the apparatus of the senses, which is that which you see. You only see the machinery, you do not see the living power that works the machinery: when the machinery is worn out, as it must be, it is laid aside in the grave to rest awhile, until God shall rebuild, restore, and rebeautify it. The man that thinks, that feels, that knows, that loves, has only left the old ruined house to awake amid the glories of the sky, and to wait for “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Thus death is sleep; but it is not unconsciousness—do not take up that notion. Absent from the body is present with the Lord. “To me,” says the apostle, “to live is Christ, to die is great gain.” The thief upon the cross

was addressed, "*To-day* shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Therefore while death is sleep, it is not the suspension of consciousness, of life, of thought.

But this simile teaches that there is enjoyed by death, as I will explain more fully, perfect repose. We sleep at night in order to recruit our exhausted energies, and to prepare us for new toils and tasks that are before us on the morrow. Death is just sleep in as far as sleep involves the idea of refreshment, rest, and repose. The soldier of the cross has "finished the good fight," and now wears the laurel beside the throne; the labourer has done his day's work, and he now rests; the traveller has finished his journey, the Christian his conflict, and wearied, they have entered into "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." "They rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." They rest; "yet they rest not day nor night," saying, "Glory, and honour, and blessing unto the Lamb."

In sleep also there is security. When we lie down to sleep, we are satisfied, after fastening all means of access, that we are secure; we could not sleep unless we were satisfied that we were safe from the thief, the robber, and the assassin. So when the believer sleeps, he enters into a state of perfect security. The doors that shut the saint in shut all intruders out. They that are there never go out, they are perfectly secure.

The next idea that sleep implies is, restoration. We go to sleep, expecting to rise in the morning refreshed. Even so Jesus died, and rose again; and "them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," that is, at the morning of the resurrection. "As for me," says David, "I shall behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." "They," says Daniel, "that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life."

What a different picture does this give us of the grave!

The whole of 1 Cor. xv. may be inscribed, and by the eye of faith will be seen to be inscribed, upon the tombstone of every son of God. The grave is but the resting-place; it is the land where God's seed is sown; it is the vestibule to glory. In a few years—certainly a few years to the oldest, and it may be a few to the youngest, those ties that keep us below shall, if we are the people of God, be removed, and there shall be a gathering together which shall consummate alike our glory, our happiness, and our peace.

Beautifully therefore (without entering upon the subject further) does Jesus say, "Thy brother shall rise again." Sister, thy brother shall rise again; father, thy child shall rise again; child, thy father shall rise again; friend, thy friend shall rise again. They whose dust is in graves that man has never dug—they whose sleeping ashes are in the deeps of the desert sea, with the cold sea-weeds about them, and the chimes of the ocean's waves for their requiem—they whose grave is in the desert, whose winding-sheet is the barren and scorching sand—they that sleep in the stony chambers of the pyramids, or under their shadows—they who have been scattered by wind and wave to the four ends of the earth, or whose bones are bleaching upon the barren Alps—shall all hear the sound of the last trumpet; and the king shall obey as quickly as the beggar. The dust that is in ancient urns shall be warmed, and every man shall come to receive his righteous sentence "according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil." The monument of bronze shall not keep back the prince; the green turf shall not keep back the beggar. The very dust beneath our feet shall be quickened, and all shall rise again. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

Brethren, are you Christians! Are you the people of

God? That is the question of questions—a question that becomes more instant, urgent, eloquent every day. Scenes strange and solemn, as I have told you, are opening on us; circumstances throughout the whole world indicate, like petrels, the coming storm. If ever there was present a crisis, or an epoch in the world's history, when men should at least have one sure and fast foothold, that revolution shall not shake nor dire judgment destroy, it is the day in which our lot is cast. My dear friends, seek the Saviour; open your hearts to the entrance of his blessed gospel: for every soul that is without God is without excuse. Every man who is not a Christian has no reason for not being so except that he will not. But I am instantly checked, when I think of urging you to be Christians, by the thought—"Is Christianity a nauseous and unpalatable thing, that I must ask men to take that which all the instincts of their nature recoil against?" My dear friends, it is "good news," it is the pardon of the greatest sin; it is the acceptance of the greatest sinner; it is joy to the broken heart; it is hope to the mourning heart; it is the panacea for all ills, the prescription for all diseases; it is the entrance into joys below, and into yet fuller joys at the right hand of God, and pleasures for evermore. I wonder that any man can have one happy pulse in his heart or one sweet moment in his rest who is not a Christian. I wonder, too, that any man should be depressed, discouraged, or fear, or be alarmed, who knows that when all things are moved, he has "a house not made with hands," and that when the mountains are cast into the sea, and the earth shakes with the swelling thereof, he can say to his throbbing, his palpitating, his anxious heart, "Be still, and know that it is God. He will be exalted among the nations, he will be exalted in the earth."

## LECTURE VI.

## THE LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE.

And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees in council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us,

that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him.—JOHN xi. 28-57.

WE have studied the previous part of this impressive and interesting miracle. I come now to its end—to that crowning act by which it was so gloriously closed: the resurrection of Lazarus. I need not say that every verse might be the basis of a sermon; but it is sometimes expedient and highly useful that we should look at passages as wholes, and not break them into fragments, in order to build on every fragment the superstructure of an appeal, an argument, or an address.

On the present occasion, therefore, I will incidentally examine the whole of the narrative I have read. In the 28th verse, we read that Martha hears the sound of joy in the very words that Jesus had uttered: “I am the resurrection and the life.” What he intends to do with her brother she evidently knows not; but joy she evidently felt, and because of the prospect of some good he was about to achieve for her; and with that beautiful and unselfish characteristic by which the people of God ought always to be distinguished, she is resolved not to have a monopoly of the joy. She desires to share it with her sister Mary. She therefore runs to her secretly, and whispers in her ear the missionary sentiment which this female evangelist so joyfully conveyed: “The Master is come, and calleth for

thee." To be missionaries is the duty, yea, rather the privilege, of us all: the sister to her sister, the female to her friends, as well as the minister upon the distant isles of the ocean, and amid the untrodden deserts of Africa. It is a most erroneous, nay a Popish idea that we are merely to contribute a sovereign a year to send out a missionary to India or Africa, and that we are excused by that gift from doing any thing, or saying any thing, or attempting any thing, to spread the gospel in our own immediate neighbourhood. The true idea of missions is, that man, the moment he is made a Christian, becomes a missionary; the unction of the saint is thus expended in the duties and the sacrifices of the servant. And it is the feature, the grand ennobling feature, of the gospel, that he that drinks deepest of its living water thirsts most to diffuse it. You may estimate the depth of a man's Christianity by the extent of what he does, or gives, or sacrifices, or suffers, to spread it. There may be selfishness among statesmen, there may be selfishness among literary men, but there can be no selfishness among those who are truly Christians; for the very law of the economy they belong to is, that God gives us the largest blessings, that we may diffuse them the most largely around us.

Mary, we read, runs immediately to Jesus as her sister invited her, and repeats the words which had been spoken before by Martha, (ver. 32,) "Lord, if thou hadst been here our brother had not died." You recollect, when Martha first met Jesus, and told him of her brother's sufferings, and then of her brother's death, that she, too, gave utterance to the same sentiments: "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." What does this show? That it had been a frequent fire-side remark. These two sisters had often said, as they wept together over the hearth, and gazed upon the flame that reflected no longer its light

upon the face that they loved, and as their tears fell fast on the stone no longer trodden by a brother, "If Jesus had been here, Lazarus, our brother, had not died." And so deeply had this sentiment taken possession of their hearts, that Martha utters it in one place as the feeling that was uppermost in her mind, and Mary is no sooner introduced to Jesus than she too gives utterance to the same sentiment. But it was not a just remark. It indicated faith, and yet want of faith. It was as fixed a point that Jesus should not be at the bedside of the dying Lazarus, as it was that he should stand at the grave of the dead Lazarus. The "*ifs*" of men are the decrees of God. We say "if," but that "if" is as fixed as the final close of the fact to which it refers. And hence, in the remarks we make about our relatives, we often say, "Ah! if I had only taken that course; if I had only done this; if I had only sent for that physician; if I had only had recourse to this medicine, how different would it have been!" But all these *ifs* are part of the steps by which the relative rose from earth to glory, and were just as needful, and as decreed, every one of them, as that he should fall asleep in Jesus, and live for ever. I am not a fatalist, yet I believe in the sovereignty of God. What is the meaning, what is the end, above all, the comfort of the doctrine of election? It is not intended to modify what we do now. God's election is not our rule of life. It is God's written word. But when facts have taken place over which we had no control, when we have lost the near and the dear that we loved, then election comes in with all its real and blessed consolations, and tells us: This was not an accident; this was not a chance, a hap-hazard occurrence, but it was just as fixed as God's own throne, and no power on earth could have made it otherwise.

The Jews, we read, followed Mary to the tomb. "When

Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." These Jews went to the tomb in the exercise of a humane sympathy: they went to sympathize with Mary; but God sent them to be witnesses to a miracle that was to teach souls. Man pursues his own ends, chalks out his own path, and acts under the impulse of his own motives; but over every man, from the highest that sits upon the throne to the meanest that barely lives in the wretched attic, there is a controlling hand guiding, overruling, directing all to his glory, and to the most benevolent designs. So those Jews took their own way, and went on their own errand; but they were afterward used by God, as the narrative shows, to make known to the Pharisees the fact that one was raised from the dead, and that Jesus was therefore the Son of God.

An expression occurs in this verse which I may notice: Jesus "groaned in the spirit." This is an unfortunate translation; it is not positively correct, and our translators in other passages have not so rendered it. It denotes not groaning in spirit, but properly, being indignant. The idea of indignation (I do not know by what other word I could well express it) is implied in the word which is here translated "groaned in spirit." We have the very same phrase, for instance, in Mark xiv. 5, where the disciples say, "For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they *murmured* against her." That is the very same word in the original. It also occurs in other passages, with shades of variation, all of them conveying, and involving, and implying, the idea of indignation. But most persons who have examined it, and probably noticed this idea, have been perplexed by the thought, What could Jesus be indignant at? Why should there be indignation

felt in the bosom of the Son of God? I may state in answer, in the first place, that anger is not sin. It is right to be angry when the occasion demands it; only "let not the sun go down upon your wrath;" because anger long continued issues in malice, malice in revenge, and revenge in murder. Therefore the passion should be nipped in its sinless state, before it assumes its sinful and wicked development. Here the indignation was perfectly sinless. We read in other passages, "Jesus was angry, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts;" and in this place that he was filled with indignation. But still the question arises, At what was this indignation? What was its cause? I have no doubt there was a cause, and I think the circumstances in which Jesus stood afford the explanation. He called before his mind the havoc that sin had made from the beginning till that moment. Jesus heard the groanings of nature for two thousand years with awful depth and intensity. He saw sweep before him the solemn procession of disease, and death, and famine, and pestilence. He beheld the graves of the aged, and the tombs of the young; and he recollects that this earth now so blasted, was once made so beautiful; and he was indignant, righteously indignant at the havoc sin had made, and at the momentary triumph that Satan had obtained. The source of his indignation therefore was in the circumstances in which he stood; and it reveals and unvails to us that blessed truth, that Jesus,

"Though now ascended up on high,  
Yet bends on earth a brother's eye.

When he looks down upon this earth, he has no pleasure in the pains, the sins, the sufferings, and the penalties of his people—in heaven he still groans or grieves over them; and he, too, anticipates with joy (for "he shall see of the

travail of his soul and shall be satisfied") that blessed day when all sickness shall depart like a morning mist; when death shall be destroyed; when the grave shall be swallowed up in victory; and this once fair, and then yet fairer earth, shall bask in a sunshine that shall never be shaded by clouds, and all its inhabitants shall swell that glorious anthem in which there shall be no discord, and of which there shall be no suspension, "Worthy is the Lamb to receive honour, and glory, and blessing, and thanksgiving for ever and ever."

But this suggests to us a lesson as we pass. If Jesus was so indignant at the havoc that sin had made, have we any sympathy with the spirit of Jesus? Do we lament it? Do we grieve at it? And if we grieve at it, do we have recourse to the means and prescriptions of his word, to meet, to neutralize, and to remove it? The evidence that we sympathize with him, is the fact that we co-operate with him in the modes for its removal that he himself has pointed out.

It is also added in another text, what has been called the shortest text in the Bible—that while Jesus was indignant at what he saw, indignant at these spoils of the enemy, "Jesus wept." It was an anger that was mingled with intense agony of spirit, and sorrow. It may be that he wept as a friend over a friend; for we can never forget that Jesus as man touched our humanity at every point. He was a Friend, and had his friends, and reciprocated the emotions of one of not the least beautiful affections—friendship. When Jesus' friend was dead, it may be that, as a friend, Jesus wept. But no doubt there was more than that feeling in it; for if he was angry at the havoc which he saw, and which was the result and the creation of sin which he did not make, which is a blot and stain upon that fair world that was originally made so beautiful, there was

also sorrow, painful sorrow, at all that he witnessed. He was, we are told, "a man of sorrows." I know no expression in the Bible charged with intenser meaning than that phrase, "a man of sorrows," steeped in sorrow, saturated as it were with sorrow. These tears that fell from his eyes were but the faint outward manifestations of an ocean of sorrow within, that we can neither gauge, nor conceive, nor fathom. "Jesus wept." What a mixture in this miracle of the sympathy of man and of the majesty of God! Do you ask me, "Is Jesus man?" I point to his tears! Do you ask me, "Is Jesus God?" I point to his words, "Lazarus, come forth." Do you ask me what he is? I answer, man, as I am, sin excepted; knowing all my weaknesses, my sorrows, my sufferings; deeply, richly, closely sympathizing with them all; and yet, in addition to this, God, able to deliver me from the sorrows with which he sympathizes, and which he alone can mitigate and remove. Blessed be God for such a Saviour! How blessed are they that know such a joyful sound! What a prize is the Bible; what a blessing is Christianity; what a bright hope may be ours! And what a contrast must there be in the death of a Christian to the death of one who either knows not, or, if he knows, despises the gospel. I heard lately of the awfully sudden, indeed almost instant, death of one who was notorious for publishing, printing, and circulating the most wicked, atheistic, blasphemous works that ever disgraced the British press. He died with the hardened feelings with which he lived. How very awful! Yet we are not called upon to judge. We must see and be silent; but this we know, and are bound to proclaim, that the death-bed that is not illuminated by that rainbow that

"Spans the earth, and forms a pathway to the skies,"  
must be a dark and a dreary one indeed. And if, my dear

friends, you wish to have in this world the richest joy, drink deep into Christianity: if you want to make sure in the world to come of the brightest prize, grasp most firmly that cross which alone is worth glorying in; and which, every day that one lives, appears in greater beauty, and comes home to our hearts with greater preciousness. I only wonder (not at you so much as at myself) that we so lightly, so inadequately, feel those truths. I often marvel that we can hear these things without being thrilled, and rapt in ecstasy by them; for sure I am such words never sounded on the ears of the heathen; and if they had, they would have risen in ecstasy, and the very slave would have leaped with delight notwithstanding his chains.

The Jews exclaimed, as they saw Jesus weeping, “Behold how he loved him!” This was their construction: they meant that he loved Lazarus as a friend, and no doubt it was true; but there was a higher sense also in which it was true. “Behold how he loved him!” What do all the sufferings, the sorrows, the agony, the bloody sweat, the cross and passion of our Lord, speak to us but this truth, “Behold how he loved us?” In the manger, and on the cross, we read these words, “Behold how he loved us;” and loved us, not because we loved him, but he loved us, and therefore we love him; not because we had done any thing good, but he loved us in spite of our sins; and, blessed be his name, if we are his, he will also save us in spite of our sins. My dear friends, if God did not often save us in spite of ourselves, we never should be saved at all; and when we go to him, and pray, we are to draw near to him, not because we deserve—God forbid, and we are not to be driven back because we dis-serve; but we are to go to him in spite of the protests of a thousand sins, and say, in the face of all, and in the midst of all, in that still small voice

which shall be heard above the seven thunders in heaven,  
“Our Father, which art in heaven.”

“Behold how he loved him!” Others, again, argued this way: “Could not this man that did these miracles—that opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man should not die?” Of course he could. They admitted that he had opened the blind man’s eyes, and they argued most logically that he might surely have quickened the dead man’s heart. The one was just as possible as the other; and if he had power to do the one, why not have the power to do the other? They argued correctly enough, but too hastily; just as we do sometimes. We often rush to conclude when we see the beginning of a thing; but we must see the beginning and the end in order to form a right conclusion. If they had waited with a little more patience, they would have seen Lazarus coming forth from the tomb; and would have learned that this man that could open the blind man’s eyes could quicken the dead man’s dust; and that he was, what they doubted, alike a light to lighten the blind, and the life to quicken the dead.

We read again that Jesus approached the grave, and again groaned in himself. His indignation came again. I do not wonder at it. When we see the dead, some of us, who are nervous, are shocked, and some, who are not so, take it as a matter of course. Others feel pity, sorrow, pain, compassion. Rarely do we feel indignation—indignation at what caused all, and is the source of all. Jesus now, when he saw death, (shall I use the expression and not be misconstrued,) was shocked at it, grieved at it. Death, I repeat, is the most unnatural thing, and the more one thinks of it, the more horrible does it appear—that this excellent frame-work, made originally to live for ever, to bloom in amaranthine beauty, never to have a gray

hair, or a wrinkle, or a stiff joint, or a deaf ear, or a darkened eye; once so beautiful and so good that it was like God himself—that this exquisite thing, so fearfully and wonderfully made, should become so decayed that the dearest one must bury it out of sight. What hath sin done! How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed! But, what has Jesus done, who can enable us to look upon that dead face, and on that tomb, and say, O death! where, notwithstanding all this, is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? To gaze upon the crowded burial-ground, to feel it true of every saint that sleeps there, “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, even here, through Jesus Christ our Lord;” this is Christianity. We read here, too, in this interesting passage, that they evidently went to a distant place to the grave. It is quite plain from the statement that they rose and followed her, saying, “She goeth unto the grave to weep there;” and from what we read at the thirty-eighth verse, “Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.” All these words imply that the grave was not in the city. We boast very much of our being the civilized people of the nineteenth century; in fact it is the great boast of the day, that science has enabled us to do things that the ancients never dreamed of. One thing, however, science has not done. Among the ancient Greeks there was no such thing as a burial-place within a city; in the time of the ancient Jews, too, such a thing as a grave within the walls of Jerusalem was not known. It is one of those habits that, with all our science, we seem most sedulously to cherish; yet a habit in itself more unsuitable, in its origin more superstitious, in its effects more pernicious, I do not know. The origin of it was this: In Roman Catholic times, while the good habits of the heathen in this respect had passed

away, people came to believe that the church was not merely a sacred place, but that it was, as it were, a part of the sacrifice and merit of the Saviour; and in old Roman Catholic churches you will always find the rich sacerdotal and noble men buried either under the altar or somewhere near it; and you will find the other graves crowding around the altar in order to get within its sanctifying influence. This was the origin of the graveyard around churches. I admit that a great deal of beautiful sentiment may arise from it; I feel that the “*Elegy in a Country Churchyard*,” by Gray, is extremely beautiful; but facts tell us that such churchyards are extremely pernicious, and otherwise answer no good purpose. They had their origin only in superstition; and I think in the nineteenth century, in this particular, we may just fall back into the first, and do what ought to have been done years ago—form cemeteries far outside our cities, and henceforth on no consideration within them.

Martha, it is plain, thought that the body had gone completely to corruption. There was no evidence that it really was so; it was only her individual impression; and she said so to our Lord. We then read, “Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” Now these words seem liable, at first, to misconstruction; as if they meant that Jesus might ask and not be answered; or as if they implied that he was only a petitioning creature, and not also “the mighty God.” But you will see that the words are to be construed from the circumstances under which they were uttered. The Jews argued that the power that he exercised was a power from beneath. They said it was by Beelzebub that he cast out devils: this was one

of their great accusations. Our Lord, therefore, in addressing the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob on this occasion, showed them by his address to God, that the power he exercised was a power that came from God, and therefore we hear him saying here, “But because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me ; that they may see in me one who does these works of greatness by a power that is divine, and that in that prayer they may have a foretaste of my mediatorial and intercessory work before the throne.” Then we read, “And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.” This was the voice of the trumpet. You recollect reading of the trump of the archangel. We are all in the habit of talking of angels and archangels, but there is only one archangel mentioned in the New Testament, and I suspect that archangel is the Lord Jesus Christ. It means, literally, chief messenger ; as when we read of angels we might render the word *messengers*. In the sentence, “I send my messenger,” the word might have been rendered “angel.” This voice that sounded in the tomb of Lazarus was the first note of the trump of the archangel ; and an earnest of that period when those words, “Come forth,” shall go down into nature’s depths, and rise up to nature’s heights, and receive a magnificent response. There is not an atom, not a disintegrated atom of the dust of the dear dead we have left in their resting-places, that shall not hear the voice of Him that made it. We shall rise, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality ; and death shall be swallowed up in victory. We need not keep our dead near the church, as if the church could do them good ; it matters not where they are. True, one likes to see a place set apart where their ashes may rest ; but it is really matter of very little consequence whether we are devoured

by the fishes of the deep, or by the beasts of the forest; or whether the sand of the desert be our winding-sheet and the song of the ocean's waves our requiem. It matters little. Every particle shall hear the voice and trump of the archangel, and we shall meet again in circumstances of beauty, of blessedness, and of joy, which, if we knew and felt as we might, would make one frequently say, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I, too, might be there and be at rest!"

Lazarus heard the voice, and came forth. Here I may pause to notice how this explains (for I gather the lessons as I pass) the importance of speaking to dead souls. Some persons say, Why preach to a man who is dead in sins, when, from its very condition, his soul cannot hear you? You might as well have said to Jesus, "Why speak to the dead man Lazarus?" Ours is the duty to address every one, but the Lord has the power to make that address of use.

Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go." What does this teach us? First, the loosing of him was to let them see that it was truly a miracle, that there might be no carping; and, secondly, that Christ never does for man what man can do for himself. Christ saves us not in indolence, but he saves us from indolence; and any man who will plead, "I cannot read, I cannot pray, I cannot go to church till God draw me," is either deceiving me or deceiving himself. You can do many things, and it is no excuse to say, "I cannot do this, and I cannot do that, till God first move me." I say, rise, pray, hear, read; and if any man will do Christ's will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.

One fact I must not omit to notice here—that in the records of the coming forth of Lazarus, there is nothing said about any disclosures made by him in reference to the

unseen world. There have been many idle stories founded on this miracle. With many of the ancient fathers and writers, when they get any hint from the future world, the first thing discussed is the account of what the person saw, and what he heard, and what he was, and how he felt. Now the grand silence which is here preserved is, to my mind, an indirect and latent evidence of the truth of this story. Lazarus says nothing of the other world; all is silence. Christ alone tells us afterward what awaits us in the future. How did the Jews act upon this occasion? We see that, instead of being convinced and converted, they were only, or seemed to be, exasperated and roused the more. They ran and told the Pharisees and the scribes. They argued in this way: "If we let this man alone, then the Romans will come and take away our nation." They reasoned: "This man pretends to be a king, and if we let him have his way, Cæsar will come and destroy us; because we thereby show that we cease to be a province, and assume to have a dynasty and sovereignty of our own." What a remarkable illustration have we here of the great fact, that the very thing which they thought would avert the destruction of their nation, was just the very thing that brought down the thunderbolts of God's righteous judgments upon them! They argued that, if they left him alone, it would be the means of their nation being destroyed. They did not let him alone. They slew him to save the nation, and this deed was the cause of their nation being scattered throughout the earth. The high-priest of that year, a bold, bad man, (qualities that you will find occasionally developed in the case of great criminals,) dared to give utterance to a sentiment which all felt. When there is a great crowd, a revolution brewing, or something of that kind, there is generally found a vague sentiment floating in a thousand breasts, waiting for

an interpreter. What makes the orator, the leader, the man that turns up a celebrated hero? His having the boldness to give utterance to the sentiment that all feel, but which none else have the courage to express. This was the case with Caiaphas: he gave utterance to the sentiment that they had not the cruel courage to express. He says, “‘Ye know nothing at all;’ you are a people of no understanding, and no skill; listen to me. You do not ‘consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people;’” he meant, “It is expedient we should put this man to death, and get rid of him—‘that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.’” Thus he dared to suggest the death of Jesus, as the great panacea for the cure of their ills; the only means of securing the constancy and continuance of their nation. In other words, he was, like many modern men, a man of expediency; he only thought of expediency. There are two classes of men we meet with in this world: some men who never will move unless their foot can be upon a principle, a fixed principle, a great truth; and whose whole conduct shall take its shape, its tone, and direction, and colouring, from the principle they stand on, or the truth they grasp; and there are other men who are not acquainted with principles, who are not much troubled with a conscience, who have no great truths to stand upon; and they merely calculate chances. They look around, and before, and above, and beneath, (or rather, not above, but everywhere else,) and they say, “If this is done, this will be the result.” They suppose that men are exactly like a number of pieces upon a draught-board, and that they have only to calculate the forces and anticipate the sure movements, and the result will be so and so; forgetting that they have corrupted wills to deal with, and that they have a reigning God whom they have omitted from their calculations, and

that so great an omission vitiates all. We shall find, that what is true, and just, and holy, is always expedient; and what is not holy, not true, not just, may be vastly plausible, full of promise, very significant of good, yet, in the end, most inexpedient. The highest duty is the highest expediency. All experience proves that it is so. But it is added here, when Caiaphas made use of those words, "And this spake he not of himself; but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation." Then John adds, (not Caiaphas,) "And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." It is very remarkable, that Caiaphas should have here prophesied. It is an instance of what are called unconscious prophecies; and many such have occurred in the history of the church and of the world before. So Balaam, a bad man, prophesied. And not merely have prophecies been uttered in the shape of predictions of what will be, but I believe all facts that ever have occurred are not only results of the past, but are also prophets and seers, and earnests of what will be. Take an instance: Pilate wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The Jews said, "Why, this is just asserting what we deny. Say that he said, I am the King of the Jews?" What did Pilate reply? "What I have written I have written." Did he say that of himself? No, God taught him to say so; and when he said so he uttered an unconscious prophecy, just as here the high-priest uttered an unconscious prophecy. So the purple robe, the sceptre, and the crown of thorns which they put upon Jesus—what were these? They were facts, history says: they were prophecies and types, our experience, enlightened from the word of God, says. The name Caiaphas is merely a Hebrew modification of the same word applied to Peter: Cephas, a rock. There must be something significant in

this, that the last high-priest, as if he were the last type of the true High-Priest, should be called (in mockery, if I might use the word) a rock; but a rock that was soon to be shaken and moved. There is something striking in this, that just as the priesthood of Levi passed away, never to be resuscitated, the Urim and Thummim, the lights and perfections on his breast, should be suddenly illuminated with an unearthly glory; so that as a candle, before it goes out, gives its brightest flame, the priesthood of Aaron, as it passed away and perished for ever, gave forth a dying splendour that indicated it was over, and the true High-Priest was come. So now, in the present day, facts that are taking place around us, are not bare naked facts, but significant. Every fact that occurs is a rehearsal of a greater fact that will be. The fall of Tyre, of Nineveh, and of Babylon, all facts in history, are yet declared distinctly to have been prophecies too. And all that has taken place in 1848 on the continent of Europe, is just a rehearsal of what will take place on a yet larger scale, and with more terrific and tremendous results, by-and-by.

All things indicate, as I have said, that we are passing into the last days. I am more and more confirmed in this conclusion; we shall hear and experience soon such things as have not been known upon earth before. Never was there a day, in which I solemnly believe every one was more called upon to make ready. The sailor, when he hears the first whistling of the storm amid the shrouds, begins to put his vessel in trim, and prepare her to brave the storm. Should we not also learn a lesson from the signs of the times, and be ready, knowing not what a day may bring forth? This we do know, and with this I conclude my lecture, that he died—what the priest prophesied in his ignorance—he died—what the evangelist added from his light—that he might “gather together in one the chil-

dren of God that were scattered abroad." Christ is the great magnet, the great centre of attraction, the great source and bond of union, and of unity. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation," of all men, at all times, and in all circumstances, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," of whom you, I, may be the chief; he came to save us, even us; not because we are sinners, but in spite of our sins; not because we deserved it, but in spite of what we deserve.

## LECTURE VII.

## THE GREAT TYPICAL DISEASE.

And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy who seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.—LUKE v. 12-14.

THE disease called the leprosy is one which it is not possible, perhaps, accurately to describe; nor is it necessary to do so. Its physical characteristics and symptoms belong to the province of the physician, not to the discourse of the minister of the gospel. I take this disease, which so often occurs, in reference, or allusion, or judgment, throughout the Scripture, to be the great typical and teaching disease. It was selected from the rest of those diseases to which humanity has been subject, not because it was the worst of them, but in order that it should be a type, and symbol, and teacher of that more dreadful disease which has overspread the soul, the wages of which is death, and the issue of which is everlasting banishment from the presence of God.

All diseases are unnatural, monstrous, horrible. Man was never made to be diseased, nor was he meant to die. Yet there is no such phenomenon on earth as a perfectly healthy man: there is no such state. The instant we are born, such seeds and germs and elements of disease are

in us, as must eventually bring us to the grave; the instant man sinned, that moment death seized upon him. What is disease itself? It is death in its beginning. Disease is to death just what the acorn is to the oak; it is the first germ that contains all the rest. All diseases are the exponents of an inward derangement; they are the echoes, heard without, of a disorganization that is going on within. And this disease, called the leprosy, was, as I have said, selected not because it was the worst, but to be a sort of awful sacrament, as it were, of that death to which sin, the counterpart of the leprosy, leads; and to teach us that a universal plague, worse than pestilence, famine, and sword, has fallen on all humanity; and that there is but one mode of deliverance from it, that mode which was consummated on the cross, and is preached in the Bible, and enunciated by every faithful minister of the gospel.

This disease, from its typical nature, to which I must refer by-and-by, was called by the Jews the “finger of God;” by others of them it was called “the stroke,” from the way in which they were struck by it. It first attacked a man’s house, it is said; next, his clothing; and lastly, his person: and it was to be healed, mark you, (and here was its typical nature,) not by the physician’s prescription, but by the priest’s treatment. In this respect it is singled out and made to differ from all other diseases, and therefore it is what I have called it—a typical and significant disease.

In the case of the leprosy, it was not always the guiltiest that were its victims; just as in the case which I explained in reading the chapter this morning, it was not always the guiltiest who were most punished; although when special sins were committed against the theocracy, that is, the personal government of Israel by God himself, we find that this disease was almost always the judgment that was in-

flicted. This was the case of Gehazi, who sinned so grievously against God, that he went forth "a leper white as snow." You recollect also the case of Uzziah, who, when he touched the ark, was smitten with leprosy. These were especially sinful persons visited with a special judgment; but in the case of other persons, we do not know why they were visited. In the case of the leprous man before us, we cannot say why he was afflicted. It is the foolish question that was asked of old, and is asked still, "Who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" They were right in tracing the affliction to sin; wrong in supposing that in this dispensation, where there is special individual suffering, there is therefore special individual guilt. Our Lord says, in Luke, (and this is a proper corrective of people's notions still,) "Think ye that those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men?" Human nature is apt to think so. Strange it is, there is a lingering sense in the depths of man's heart of the connection between sin and punishment that he never can get rid of; but he manifests it wrongly, and applies his judgment indiscreetly, when he assumes that the eighteen who were made the victims of a signal punishment were sinners above all men. When you see one man smitten down by the sword, another dropping down by disease of the heart, another by some epidemic, you are not to say, "That man was evidently the guiltiest; he was a very great sinner, because he is singled out for a special judgment." The lesson you are to learn is this, "Except *ye* repent, *ye* shall all likewise perish."

I may notice in the next place, that there is no evidence that the leprosy was what is called infectious. I say there is no evidence in the Bible that it could be communicated from one person to another by contact. On the contrary,

we find that the Levitical priests, whose duty it was minutely to examine its symptoms, and pronounce upon its existence or its removal, touched the person, and never, in any one instance, caught the disease. Where the Levitical laws were not binding, persons infected with leprosy moved with others, and took their place in society. Here was the commanding officer of a great army, Naaman, the Syrian, who laboured under the disease, and yet lived in no separation. Persons lived twenty, thirty, or forty years under the leprosy, mixing with mankind, and discharging the duties of their respective offices. Gehazi, when smitten with it, approached the king of Israel, and there was felt no fear that the disease would be communicated. And you will recollect, where the law of Moses was binding, the sojourner and the stranger in the midst of Israel was not under the laws in this matter to which the Israelite was subject, but might freely mix with the people, although he might be smitten with leprosy. All these facts thus teach us that this disease was not infectious. Perhaps no disease is so. And I believe that as light, and science, and real wisdom grow among mankind, they will come to discover that these books of Moses, with which the infidel has made so much merriment, are, after all, not merely exponents of the highest and most sublime divinity, but are also pharmacopœias for prescriptions far more precious than at present we are disposed to admit. It may yet be discovered perhaps, (and experience seems more and more to confirm it,) that in the case of diseases which have long been thought contagious there is no contagion at all, and that it needs some vile churchyard, or some vault below the floor on which the living are—or some undrained neighbourhoods, or excess of eating and drinking, or destitution of raiment, of food, or of drink—to be conductors of the otherwise innocuous diseases; just as the lightning will

play in all its splendours innocently in the skies, until it find a conductor to carry it down in order to smite some one, and number him with the dead. It may be with our worst diseases as with the lightnings in the clouds, that there must be a conductor in order to carry down either. I believe, however, in the present day,—and I rejoice to see the feeling, for Christianity ministers to and contemplates the well-being of the body as well as the salvation of the soul,—that efforts are being made extensively to diminish these conductors of disease. I was informed by a physician what I can confirm from experience, that few have any idea of the awful, brutalized, impure physical state in which the poor are; so much so that I fear the efforts of our city missionaries and our tract-distributors will all be sadly valueless till something is done to mitigate the physical suffering, and raise the domestic condition of our poor at least to a level with the dogs in many a nobleman's kennel, who are far better cared for, and far more generously treated. You need not be informed that that which brings down the heaviest judgments of God upon a land, is that land's neglect of the poor. I do hope that every individual who has and to spare, and who knows where the poor are—not rogues, impostors, and vagabonds, who always will make poverty a stalking-horse on which to prosecute their iniquitous designs—will seek them out and minister to them. It is a great luxury to do so. Help them, cheer them, encourage them; and we shall do more in this way for the Christianization of the land, by such pioneering efforts, than we are at first disposed to anticipate. I believe that the gin-shops would very extensively be closed if we could only raise the *physical* condition of the poor. What makes them crave after alcohol, and drink to excess, is their frightful physical depression. Teetotal societies would not be wanted, and many a che-

mist's shop would be closed, if the poor people could only get clean houses, pure water, and good food to live upon. Encourage them, minister to them, comfort them, and so you will arrest disease that may in turn scathe yourselves; for if the poor are left to be great sufferers, it will be seen that the rich will suffer also; and it is well; we are thankful that it is so. If suffering did not reach the healthy, they would never sympathize with those who suffer. Minister to the poor, and feel that this is a commission and a ministry that God has given you. My dear friends, we are all passing rapidly to that state into which our money and our resources cannot go with us. He that is rich toward God, and lays up treasure in the skies, will, as a Christian, have the greatest peace below, and the most cordial welcome above: for, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

But if this disease was not contagious, why, it may be asked, were there those severe regulations respecting it? The person who was a leper was to have his lips covered, to keep his hand upon his mouth, his garments rent and torn; and he was to cry, the moment any one approached him, "Unclean, unclean." Why so? Superficial readers say it was because the disease was contagious. I believe it was because the disease was significant. The leper was meant to be a parable of death—to be, in a sensuous dispensation, in which outward symbols were made the vehicles of spiritual and inner truths, a voice sounding in the depths of the wilderness, "The wages of sin is death." Separation from the healthy, which was part of the law of the leper, was not because the disease was contagious, but because it was typical or significant—and was meant to teach that sin is the great separating element. When Jesus was crucified, he was crucified without the camp. Our sins were laid upon him; and as, by imputation, he

was the greatest sinner, so he suffered for our sins, and in our stead, *without* the camp. It is said of the New Jerusalem, that nothing that defileth shall enter it, and that all polluted, diseased things shall be outside. Sin is the great rending, splitting, separating element; it separates man from man, and it separates man from God. It has made a chasm between heaven and earth so wide and so deep, that it needed God in our nature to span it, and make a pathway back again to the skies. All the laws of the leper were designed to teach us these great and important lessons in reference to sin. If you wish to see the history of the position and treatment of the leper, read at your leisure the 13th, 14th, and 15th chapters of the book of Leviticus, where you will find a full description of the whole.

Then the *cure* of the leper was remarkable. It was not a cure to be achieved by medicine or by sanitary treatment, although perhaps these were employed, (for God is a God of means, and such means are right in their place,) but it was to be healed by special ecclesiastical or spiritual rites. There were chosen two birds; one was to be slain, and the other was to be dismissed; the hyssop was to be dipped in the blood of the slain bird, and sprinkled on the leper. This will explain the beautiful expression of David, (Psalm li.,) "Purge"—or cleanse—"me with hyssop;" that is, the hyssop thus dipped in the blood of the slain bird, without shedding of blood there being no remission of sins. As that blood was sprinkled upon the leper, and the man was then pronounced clean, so David, looking through the outward symbol to the inner and spiritual truth, says, "Cleanse me with hyssop; yea, Lord, wash me in that blood that cleanseth from all sin, of which the sacrifice of that bird was but the faint and the imperfect type."

Thus, we see this disease was cured by cedar, and hyssop, and scarlet, and a sacrifice especially appointed for that purpose. And this confirms the view I have taken, that it was a type significant of what sin is, and what the issues of sin are, and how it may be put away.

The fact that Jesus healed this disease, is evidence that he sustained no ordinary office or character. He did not heal it by that miraculous virtue, by exerting which he healed the ordinarily diseased; but he assumed, in healing it, to be the great High-Priest, the antetype of him whose priesthood was about to pass away. When John asked for evidences that Christ was the Messiah, we read that one of the evidences given, and not the least expressive, was, "The lepers are cleansed." That was not a reference to his power, nor to his mercy, but evidence that the Aaronitic priesthood was passing into the true priesthood and the rites of Levi merging into the realities of the glorious gospel.

When the leper approached Jesus, he used the very humble, yet very trustful language, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." That leper saw in Christ more than a mere healer of disease by miraculous power. He knew quite well that leprosy was, if I might so speak, an ecclesiastical disease—that it could only be cured by ecclesiastical prescription, or by divine power. When, therefore, he asked Jesus to cure his leprosy, he recognised him not only as omnipotent, and able to heal the disease, but as a priest in Israel, able to minister to that peculiar form of disease which the priest alone was to deal with. You will notice too, when the leper came to Jesus, no claim was expressed upon his sympathy; he uttered not a word that indicated his feeling that he had a title to his favour; he approached him with all the abasement of a sinner, as we should do; and yet with all

the confidence of a son, as we may also do. A soul that sees its sin, and that sin deadly, and sees in Jesus a Saviour, and that Saviour willing and able, is not to be repelled or restrained from approaching him. As the leper in this case trampled down the Levitical law, which forbade him to touch anybody, and ran to Jesus ; so we are to trample down all obstructions, and, as the greatest of sinners, come at once, in spite of our sins, into contact with the greatest Saviour, and obtain absolution, forgiveness, and remission.

Persons argue, and argue most foolishly, that they may not go to Christ with confidence because they are sinners. It is because you are sinners that you may go ; it is as sinners that you are invited ; and it is in spite of your sins that you are to take courage ; in fact, you will never taste what the freedom and the fulness of the gospel are, till you feel that the greatest sin that has stained your history in the past, may this very moment, on simple application, be blotted out and remembered no more against you, through that blood which cleanseth from all sin.

Jesus treated the Levitical law just as the leper treated it: it was no obstruction to the exercise of his power and goodness. It is said he touched the leper. If it was contrary to the Levitical law for the leper to go to Jesus, it was just as contrary to the Levitical law for Jesus to touch the leper. The fact that Christ touched the leper is a gleam of an inner and hidden truth, that he was more than man. If Jesus had been a mere man, to have touched the leper would have been to defile himself ; but he was more than man, and did not, therefore, defile himself, but cured the leper of his leprosy. The sun that shines in the firmament casts his beams upon all that is polluted on the earth below, but retains unscathed his own purity and splendour. Infinite health could come into contact with disease, and

not be diseased ; infinite and eternal life could come into contact with death, and neither be tainted nor die. The fact therefore that Jesus touched the leper, and when he did so, cured him, is the evidence that he was more than man, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace. And, my dear friends, is Christ dead ? Has he ceased to be ? No. We do not see him, but he no less lives ; we do not hear him, but he no less reigns ; because he is beyond the horizon of our vision he is not beyond the reach of our prayers, he has neither ceased to hear prayer nor to answer it. He is just as able to keep you from disease as he is to cure disease. We may ask him to do so. I am one of those who believe that we ought to pray for temporal blessings. He has thus taught us : " Give us this day our daily bread." You may ask for temporal blessings ; and if they are for his glory, and to your greatest good, they will be given to you ; if not, then, " Thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven," should be the utterance of our hearts.

When the patient was cured, Jesus said to him, " See that thou tell no man, but go and show thyself to the priest." What was meant by this ? If the man, the instant he was cured, had blazoned it abroad, the priest would have heard of it ; he would have looked upon him, and out of spite and malice (sins by which the priests and Pharisees were deeply stained at that moment) he would have said, " There is no cure ; the man is labouring under leprosy still." But when the man went quietly, and showed himself to the proper appointed officer, the priest, not knowing who made the cure, pronounced, from his own inspection, that the man was clean. Thus there was the voice of an enemy testifying that the finger of God was in the cure of that man's leprosy. And thus all the miracles of Jesus will stand the test of all his enemies ;

and I may add, what is equally true, that all the words of Jesus, all that are contained in this book, will stand all ordeals, and survive all opposition, and come forth from all examinations, only bearing a brighter and more vivid signature that they are the inspiration of the Spirit, and the teaching of the Son of God.

Have any of you been cured of sin? Have any of you had your sins forgiven?—it is not presumption, but piety, to feel so:—then, my dear friends, you are called upon to go and act. Our forgiveness is not the ultimate result, but only the preface to a future life of devotedness, of service, of activity. Go and do, is the direction to every one that is healed. First the cure, then consistent conduct; first the forgiveness of our sins, then obedience. And mark the beautiful force of such obedience. When an unforgiven man tries to do God's will, he does it as a person hired tries to do the work which he is engaged to do in order to earn the wages promised him; he works as a slave, and has the feelings of a slave; but when a person is forgiven, he goes and does God's will, not in order to obtain something, but because he has obtained all. The first works as a slave, the second obeys as a son. The first does it in bondage, cringes, and shrinks in the presence of a taskmaster; the latter walks as a son in the sunshine of a father's love, holding communion and fellowship with one who delights to bless him and to do him good. Go you then, my dear reader, do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Go and tell what great things God has done for you. Go and devote your energies to every cause for which those energies may be fitted, and for which you can spare them; not to be justified, but because you are justified; not to reach forgiveness, but because you have obtained forgiveness; and you will do so then with joyful emotions, an elastic footstep, and a

bounding heart. So much for the history of this cure. Let me now draw three practical lessons from all I have stated.

We, too, are the subjects of a disease far more terrible than leprosy. That disease is described by Isaiah, when he says, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." We were shapen in sin, (this terrible disease,) we were brought forth in iniquity (this worse than Gehazi's leprosy;) its sting is poison, its wages is death. The house is infected, and the inhabitants too; the garment is infected, and the wearer too; the world is infected, and all that dwell therein. A miasma far more terrible than all the plagues that have visited humanity, creeps through every home, nestles in every heart, infects every soul, taints every thought, pollutes every conscience, and, unless we are delivered from its terrible poison, the issue of it must be everlasting misery and estrangement from God.

In the next place, no human being can atone for, or cleanse from, this terrible disease. The Jew felt it in his temple; the Gentile is conscious of it in his pagoda; and in both temple and pagoda, from the earliest moment of the fall, Jew and Gentile, the one by divine light and the other by human light, have been trying if they could propitiate him against whom their consciences tell them they have sinned, and draw down from God those blessings which their own hearts assure them they have justly forfeited. But no atonement man can make is adequate to remove it. The prophet says, and says justly and expressively, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before

him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" All these are vain, and utterly profitless. No moral, ecclesiastical, or sacramental rite can cleanse us; all the tears that penitence ever shed cannot cleanse us; all the sufferings that martyrs ever endured at the stake cannot cleanse us; all we can pay or promise can never cleanse us. The dye is too deep for aught human to expunge it, the guilt is too high for aught that man can do to reach it. "By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified." This plague none but a priest, the High-Priest who is in heaven, can heal and remove.

And this leads me, therefore, to announce that blessed truth, which is the very music and glory of the gospel, that "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." If we are all the victims of this great, wasting, moral plague, if nothing we can pay, or procure, or promise, or suffer, or do, can sweep it away, how blessed, how welcome are these tidings, that the Lamb of God taketh away—not *took* away, not *will* take away, but *taketh* away—the sins of the world; conveying to us this bright idea, that every moment there is a transfer of our sins to him who takes them away into a land of forgetfulness for ever! How blessed to such sin-convinced and plague-smitten persons is this glorious passage, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son [not once did cleanse, and now has lost its efficacy; not will one day cleanse when we are more worthy of it; but now,] cleanseth from [not this sin, or that sin, or little sin, if such there be, but it cleanseth from] *all* sin!" and its virtues are lasting as the wants of humanity; its efficacy is a present efficacy.

Throw your hope upon this blessed truth, that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Plead at the mercy-seat this fact, that he that knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Just as God's wrath settles, and lights, and fastens with a consuming and corroding power upon every soul that is not sprinkled with that blood, so sure God's love, and mercy, and peace settle and fasten with saving power upon every soul that is sprinkled with that precious blood. But what is it to be sprinkled with it? Not to be literally so. The soldiers who pierced the side of Jesus on the cross were sprinkled literally with his blood, but they were not one whit better for that. To be sprinkled with this blood is to believe God's testimony about it. It is just to say, this to God: "Oh! my God, the plague is in my heart, consuming, wasting, sinking me to the depths of hell; and, if left so, I must perish for ever. And oh! my God, thou hast told me that Jesus died for all that believe, that he endured the curse for all that rest on him. I believe, O Lord, what thou hast told me—the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin; I believe thy love can lighten where that blood is, and thy wrath cannot scathe where that blood is. Lord, I ask of thee to give me thy peace, to bestow upon me thy mercy, and shed down upon me thy forgiveness, for no reason in the wide universe, in me, or out of me, or about me, but for this reason alone, that Jesus died that I, a poor sinner, might live." If you say so, and feel so from the very depth of your heart, there is no truth in the Bible if you are not forgiven; there is no truth in Christianity if God does not pardon you. He himself says, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; ask, and ye shall obtain." The gospel, my dear reader, is good news; and not good news for to-morrow, but good news for to-day. And the

good news are these—that he that believeth on the Son of God had eternal life. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. The Lamb of God taketh away the sins of the world. I am convinced and persuaded that no man who thus feels and thus prays will ever perish.

In closing my remarks, let me allude once more to what I touched upon in a previous lecture in this work—the great truth, that while individuals, conscious of individual sin, are seeking that the blood of the Lamb may sprinkle individual consciences, how beautiful it would be if the whole nation would get, as the Israelites of old got, within the threshold, the blood of the Lamb being sprinkled upon that threshold without; and pray that God would remember them according to his covenant and his loving-kindness, and have mercy upon them, and spare them!

This leads me also to notice what I have seen as professed philosophy—but which is the very essence of infidelity—in some of the papers, in very few of them, I believe, but in two certainly, where they argue that the existing epidemic\* in the atmosphere is a law of the world. Perhaps only philosophers know that the word “law” means a great fact—a thing that must be, a thing that always is. They argue that the existence of disease in the air is a great law, just as much as that the wind blows, the rain falls, rivers roll, stones fall to the ground; and that it being a great law, it is most absurd for a nation to pray that God would be pleased to remove that which is necessary, and, with some small evil, is nevertheless doing gigantic good. Suppose now that it is a law. Whence did this law come? Did God make the atmosphere originally in such a condition? We know he did not. Disease arose from sin; it is a child of sin. But surely to acknowledge our sin, and seek forgiveness of it, may lead, not-

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\* The epidemic of 1849.

withstanding all the boasts of proud philosophy, to its removal notwithstanding. If it be a law that there shall be a certain taint in the atmosphere, there is another law that these literary philosophers forget, namely, that conscious weakness, in its sufferings, always feels an instinctive impulse to appeal to omnipotent power for deliverance. If the one be recognised as a law, why not recognise the other as such! Instead, therefore, of the first law being a reason for trampling on the second, the recognition of the first should be received by true philosophers, and will be received by true Christians, as only contemporaneous with the practice and observance of the last, which is, to seek deliverance from him who is mighty to save. But amid all this jargon about the laws of nature, I beg to remark, there is an old-fashioned book, commonly known by the name of the Bible, not an unknown book in this land, however little it may be known in some newspaper offices; and that book tells us—words we have often heard, and that dying saints have delighted in, and have had their hearts kindled with the first rays of glory radiant from its pages—“Is any man afflicted? Let him pray.” That is a law. “Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you; ask, and ye shall obtain.” Why, that is a law too. If the first be a law, that there shall be a taint in the atmosphere, as they say, then the last is not only a law, but an express obligation, privilege, and commandment; and it is their duty, therefore, if they will observe the first, not to neglect and despise the second. But they say, “Can you expect that God will work a miracle?” You will recollect that I explained the nature of a miracle in the case of the water being turned into wine. Ordinarily, the vine produces grapes, and the grapes are turned into wine; but Jesus did in a minute what it takes a twelvemonth’s process to do in ordinary circumstances.

The tree is planted, the rain and dews fall, the grapes grow and are pressed, and the juice is fermented, and thus turned into wine. Jesus only shortened the process, and turned the water by his look into wine. I believe miracles are wrought now just as truly as they were wrought then; only we have got so accustomed to atheistic philosophy, that what is God's finger we call in our proud and vaunting wisdom "great laws," "vast phenomena," that we must not meddle with, or dare to touch. But here may be the difference. When Jesus wrought a miracle in curing the leper, he did so visibly, before men's eyes; but may he not work miracles still, only not before our eyes? The whole difference may be that the miracle, instead of being done by Jesus on this lower floor, is still done by him in the upper sanctuary. The process by which he removes disease we cannot explain; but the fact that he answers prayer we rejoice to know; and no infidelity shall be able to take it from us. The instincts of nature are often nobler in their wreck than the inductions of modern philosophy. Let a mother hear the wind whistle, and see the waves roll with tempestuous fury, and let her know that her first-born, and her only son, is in the frail bark that is tossed upon the billows; let that mother see the ship struggling, and wrestling, and creaking, amid the terrible waves, do you think she would be persuaded by the philosophy of newspapers not to pray to God to preserve her child? All the instincts of her nature would rise and pray, "O God, save my child!" And these instincts are the highest philosophy when they are sustained and confirmed by the word of God. Then, my dear friends, cast the skeptic newspapers to the dogs; pity the poor editor who writes such nonsense, and tries, under the garb of philosophy, to avert national humiliation and national prayer. Cleave to this, that God does hear prayer.

## LECTURE VIII.

## LONELY THANKFULNESS.

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.—LUKE xvii. 11-19.

IN my last lecture I explained the nature, or rather the moral and spiritual significance, of the disease which is here alluded to. I did so in commenting upon the cure of the leper, whom Jesus healed, and then sent to the priest to show himself, that he might have the attestation of the priest that it was a cure, and that the ordinance of God, as long as it stood, might be thereby honoured. The physical disease has all but disappeared from the earth; its spiritual and moral significance as the type of sin, as I explained before, remains, and is instructive still. If the leprosy has passed away like the types of Levi, the spiritual disease of sin remains coeval with the existence of humanity; and, blessed be God, not wider than the cure that can thoroughly remove it.

We read on the last occasion of one leper; on the present occasion we read of ten. These ten were a mixed

company ; there was, at all events, one thankful Samaritan, and there may have been more Samaritans, though thankless, and associated in spirit, as in person, with the Jews. Let us recollect that the Jew and the Samaritan were the bitterest antagonists. The one professed to be a churchman, the other assumed to be a seceder. This was not probably the proper modern explanation of their position, but certainly modern antipathies are the nearest possible approach to the antipathies that existed between the Jew and the Samaritan ; for they held even exclusive dealing : “the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” This group, we find, are together—two hostile parties constituting one company apparently without murmur, protest, or dispute, or expression of the enmity they felt, and did not hesitate to express, on other and different occasions. Now what can be the explanation of their present concord ? Our Lord could not meet the Samaritan woman without her reviving the old exasperating controversy, whether in this mountain or in that men should worship ; but on this occasion, strange to say, the ten lepers, Jews and Samaritans, had no quarrel about where they should worship, but seem to have prayed in one litany for the blessing which they felt they must obtain. What was the reason ? Perhaps it is this—that parties who, in ordinary circumstances, are full of exasperating feelings, of ill-will, animosity, pride, exclusiveness, want of forbearance, are, beneath the heat and pressure of a common calamity, fused into one, and made to forget in judgment what they will not forego in love—the deep and rankling sense of their common quarrels and disputes. A sense of common danger buries all disputes. Let a storm overtake the gallant ship ; let the passengers have been at daggers-drawn in the cabin a few hours before ; when the masts bend before the gale, and her timbers creak, and a watery

grave threatens every soul, they all forget their quarrels, and try to co-operate for deliverance. Let the storm come, with thunder, lightning, hail, and rain; and we shall find churchman and dissenter, tory and whig, Jew and Gentile, all rush into one shelter, so thankful for a covert from the storm that they forget they had been fighting only hours before. The knowledge of this, then, is the explanation, perhaps, of the fact that Jew and Samaritan were here present in peace. And may it not be, that the severe epidemic that has overflowed the land, and smitten great masses of the people, has been sent not only for the reasons which I specified on a previous Sabbath, but also to make men forget, beneath the pressure of a dire calamity, what they would neither forget or forgive amid the enjoyment of great blessings. I grieve that there should be any feeling among Christians that should require such judgment in order to eradicate it. Esau and Jacob, who quarrelled so bitterly in their prosperity, when their aged father died, met over his body and mingled their tears together in mutual sympathy and earnest forgiveness. Thus God sometimes drives together by the scourge those who will not be drawn together by the attractions of his mercy. If any man, then, have quarrelled with another—if there be any churchman now who is very bitter to dissenters, or any dissenter who is very bitter against churchmen, remember that one of the duties which every judgment God sends inculcates, is to be tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us. It is to teach all to pray, and pray as none ever prayed before, “Forgive us our trespasses, O our Father, even as we forgive them that trespass against us.”

These ten, we read, as one man, “stood afar off.” This was duty. I explained this to be the position that the leper

was bound by the law of the land to assume; not that the disease was contagious, but that it was significant or typical of the great separation that sin makes. Thus they stood afar off. This the law of the leper still teaches us, and was meant to teach the Jew in a sensuous economy, in which material things were made mirrors of spiritual and moral truths, that sin is the great separating, rending, splitting element. It is this that keeps us far off from God, and far off from each other. Nations are separated by seas, and languages, and deserts; and these languages, which we spend our youth in acquiring, are evidences of the sin and rebellion of man against God. Churches are separated by forms, ceremonies, protests, contendings, wrestlings, as they call them, for things which they deem significant, but which, when looked at in the right light, are too paltry, and in some respects worthless. Individuals are separated by place, by feeling, by estrangement, by fear, by dread, from one another; and all are separated from God; till at length the points of repulsion between man and man, and man and God, grow more numerous and powerful than the points of attraction that should bind us into one brotherhood, and all into one family, with God our Father. These lepers stand afar off; and they tell us, as they stand, that sin has made us afar off; and remind us, by contrast, of the blessed truth, that we who were afar off are made nigh through the blood of the covenant in Christ Jesus.

The lepers, however, though standing afar off, prayed. Beautiful is this truth; there is no distance from God to which sin can drive us by its centrifugal force, which the voice of prayer cannot span; there is no chasm between God and us which the feet of love cannot wade, and which the wing of love cannot cross. It matters not how deep we have fallen, or how distant we have been driven; the silent, half-choked, half-suppressed cry, "God, be merciful

to me a sinner," will span that chasm, and cross that depth, and be heard in God's ear louder than the thunders, and sound the most musical tone amid the hosannas and halle-lujahs of the blessed; for there is no shout in heaven more joyful or more beautiful than when an angel cries, or Jesus proclaims, "Behold, he prays." May I not say, if judgments have led us to pray, how sanctified! If fear for the safety of the poor casket has made the jewel think of the Rock from which it was struck, and to which it may be united, how blessed has that judgment been!

When these lepers prayed, they showed that they felt their misery. No man prays for deliverance till he feels danger; no one seeks a cure till he feels a disease. It is a strange contrast between sin in the soul, the moral disease, and the leprosy, or any other disease of the body, that the worse the bodily disease the more one feels it, but the worse the spiritual disease the less one feels it. In the spiritual disease insensibility is the evidence of the greatest peril. No man is so bad as he who says in his heart, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and in need of nothing;" for it is of that very man that God utters or registers the verdict in heaven, "Thou knowest not that thou art poor, and wretched, and blind, and miserable, and in need of all things." A deep sense of sin is one of the best evidences of a true interest in the grace of God, and in the salvation of the gospel. We do not say that men are to desire their sin should be great, but that their sense of their sinfulness should be deeper, more poignant, more real. Whenever there is a deep sense of sin created in the sinner's heart, there is the best evidence that the Spirit of God has begun that work which he will consummate in his own good time.

With one voice, then, they prayed that Jesus would have mercy upon them, expressing their cure by the word *mercy*. There is skill in the cure of disease, and there may be at-

tention, for all of which we are to be thankful; but in the cure of every disease there is also mercy. We need mercy to forgive the sin which is the root of suffering; and it is the end of mercy to heal the disease which is only the expression and product of that sin.

Jesus, on this occasion, bade them go to the priest, and show themselves. Now, this was just reversing the process that he pursued on a previous occasion. In the case of the leper on which I last commented, Jesus first cured the man, and then bade him go and show himself to the priest. How can we explain what seems conflicting? What would be contradiction in the case of an ordinary man, who can only judge of inner feeling by outer acts, is perfect harmony in the case of Jesus, whose eye could penetrate the depths of the heart and conscience, and see what mode of treatment was the best for the patient who was placed in his hand. He saw, truly, that while one mode might be most useful in one case, it would yet be the most useless in another case. I appeal to every one's experience. All men are not brought to a knowledge of the gospel in the same way. And the great risk, I think, of what is called experimental preaching; the highest and holiest and purest eloquence, proceeding, as it does, from the depths of a deep acquaintance with the mind of God, and a rich experience of the gospel of Christ—the risk, I say, of such preaching, in ordinary hands, is that the minister sets up the mode of his own conversion as a standard and model by which others are to be converted. This should not be. God convinces one in one way, and another in another way. One man he pardons on his first appeal, and gives him a deep and joyous sense that he is forgiven; another man he allows to grope in darkness, to be oppressed by doubts, and overwhelmed with fears, and to have at times a sense of deep despondency, approaching to absolute despair; but

both men, the one by a straight line, and the other by a circuitous and zig-zag, but equally divine line, are being brought to Jesus for forgiveness and acceptance before him. Let us then learn that no man's conversion to God ought to be set up as a type or model of every other man's; each must take mercy from Christ in the shape in which he is pleased to bestow it. Each must be satisfied to rest in God, and never to prescribe to God. I believe that one cause of our disquiet is, that we think that because God does not come to us in the way we have laid down, therefore he does not come to us at all; or that because he does not give us now what others obtain at the same moment, and under the same circumstances, therefore he has forgotten or forsaken us. This is just imitating the conduct of Naaman the Syrian. It is said of him, "Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee and thou shalt be clean." Now this prescription was in all outward respects just as improbable and unlikely to cure him as "Go and show thyself to the priest." What did Naaman say? "Naaman was wroth, [like many a person still,] and went away and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, [that is, the prophet,] and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." He went with his mind pre-made up to undergo a certain treatment; and if he did not become the subject of that treatment, he augured that there was no possibility of cure. Then he added: "'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?' This prophet is not only adopting a new process, which, to me, seems empiricism, but is actually slighting my country, and putting up his Jordan, that river in which the Jew glories, in comparison with our splendid Abana and Pharpar, which are at least as full, and rich,

and beautiful. If I am to wash, therefore, and be clean, may I not wash nearer home, and save the long journey,—wash in better water, and thus be cured?" "So he turned, and went away in a rage." Now the servant, who had that rare gift, common sense, (and Christianity is common sense in its highest manifestation,) "came near, and spake unto him and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?" How true is such philosophy! If a minister or priest were to bid some go and make a pilgrimage to Edinburgh, Dublin, or Petersburg, or Paris, or Rome, and wear hair-cloth girdles or iron spikes, and then tell them their sins would be forgiven—if he were to bid them do some great things like these, they would do them at once. "How much rather, then, when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean?" Is it not the strange, but painful experience, that we can induce a man to sleep with nettles, or wear hair-cloth, or fast as long as we like, in order to obtain forgiveness, far more easily than persuade him to renounce a cherished lust, give up a beloved passion, put confidence in God, and do God's bidding under all circumstances? So true is it that human nature, whether it wash in the Jordan, or in Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus,—whether personated in Naaman, the Syrian, or in us, the sinners, is the same human nature, till transformed by the touch of the Spirit of God, and so made to see things at another angle, and to understand them in a very different light.

When the ten lepers were told to go and show themselves to the priest, they proved by their obedience that they had great confidence in him who gave them the commission, for they instantly rose, we are told, and went. They knew that the priest could not heal them, the law

being that he could only pronounce whether they were clean or not. I think I have already remarked in some former lecture, that we have, in this, some light cast upon the assumed prerogative of the priests of Rome, and of certain priests who are going toward Rome, both of whom profess to have the power of forgiving sins judicially. It is stated in Leviticus, that the priest shall cleanse the leper, and they have argued that, by parity of reason, the modern priests may pardon sin. Certainly, if to cleanse the leper means that the priest could cure the leper, the analogy would seem conclusive, and the modern priest might fairly and logically infer that he too might pardon sin. But the word translated "cleanse," is only the Hebrew form, as is explained in parallel and contiguous passages, for *pronouncing clean*. The power that the priest had was not to cleanse the leper, but only to examine him, and say, "He is clean," or "He is not clean." The Hebrew word for *pronouncing clean*, is "cleanse." We read, "Ye shall pronounce him unclean." In the Hebrew it is, "Ye shall unclean him." The literal translation of the one passage is, "Ye shall cleanse him," and of the other, "Ye shall uncleanse him." In the one clause, however, our translators have given the meaning instead of the word itself; and if they did it in one clause, they ought, by the same paraphrase, to have given the meaning in the other. The modern minister of the gospel, then, has no power, implied in this illustration, to forgive sin. This one thing he can do, however, and so can the layman too, if he sees evidences of love and faith, he can comfort him that is in doubt, perplexity of mind, and fear, by assurances, not from any oracle within him, but from God's word without him, that such a one gives evidence of forgiveness, and may take the hope, the comfort, and the joy of it too.

These lepers knew that the priest could only pronounce clean or unclean, but still they went. Christ's word is the secret of all possible virtue. Every precept of Jesus is two-thirds of it a promise. A command from the lips of Jesus assumes a different formula from a command from Mount Sinai. The command from Sinai is, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not;" but the command of Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" here is the benediction, or the preface: "the pure in heart," this is the command: "they shall see God," this is the promise. Thus, his command has a benediction for its preface, and a promise for its peroration, or close. That the command might not cause terror in those to whom it is addressed, he makes a blessing introduce it and a promise seal it. Thus, Christ's commands are two-thirds promises.

The lepers heard his command, and gave instant obedience; and it is said, "as they went they were cleansed." This teaches us, that if any man will do Christ's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of him. If I now address any reader who does not see fully, as I think I see, and as I think, by God's grace, I could teach him to see, that this blessed book is God's book, I would say, just act up fully to the light you have, and pray for more, and you will never be left in darkness. Let any one act up to the light that he now has, and be fervent in prayer for more light, and such a one will not be abandoned to darkness. It is no excuse to say, you have not light, when you are not walking in what you have. Act up to what you have, and wait upon God for more; and see if he does not honour your obedience to the light you possess, by giving the light that you are anxious to obtain.

The lepers were cured as they went. We have evidence here of the deity of Christ. The air they breathed became the vehicle of his power; the distance, as it lengthened

between them and Jesus, was spanned by his almighty goodness; his mercy followed its objects, and neither missed them in its transit, nor misapprehended them in its application. "And as they went they were cured." And is this Christ the same this year that he was in the year 32? No doubt of it. His power is not parted with by his ascent; nor is it in the least spent in its daily passage to the earth, but operates its miracles still. "Laws of nature," is but atheistic phraseology for ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ. And at this moment he has but to touch the upper strata of the air we breathe, and the under strata and currents of air shall be restored to their virgin purity and to their Eden health; he has but to speak the word and all battle, and all sword, and famine, and pestilence, shall be swept from the world, and the earth shall put on her coronation robes and her primal glory, and silently praise him who has transformed her by his touch, and made her what she is. But if, as they say, we are not to expect miracles,—if in the cure of disease God does not alter the air, may he not suggest lessons to the physician? I believe the physician to be a divine officer; I believe medicine to be a divine ordinance; I believe it to be the yearning efforts of man to bring back nature to what Adam found her before he sinned. The physician is continued, by a succession that shall not cease, as the testimony of what once was, what now is, and what will again be, when the great Physician shall heal all, and put into the springs of nature that pure and precious branch which shall sweeten, and purify, and sanctify them all. May not, then, he who could thus heal at a distance—to whom space was no obstruction—who could say, Go, thy son, or thy daughter liveth—may he not, at this moment, when, as I told you in my Apocalyptic

Sketches, the seventh vial is poured into the air—graciously breathe into the physician's mind a prescription that will heal where healing efforts are, during the existing epidemic, perfectly paralyzed?

Thus, God may breathe into the surgeon's or physician's mind a new thought, or he may touch the air and impregnate it with new healing. In either case it is God. We may and ought to ask for temporal blessings: Christ teaches us to do so, "Give us this day our daily bread." Why not, "Give us health?" We need not only bread, but health to eat it. Every one, therefore, should pray that God would be pleased to give us health and safety and strength; and not pray for ourselves only, as if we were selfishly seeking, but for the numbers of poor who suffer; and show thus that we sympathize with them. The virtue is not in what we eat, but in the blessing that accompanies it. The cure is not in the prescription, but in the prescriber. "As they went they were cured."

The very first emotion in the hearts of these ten lepers ought to have been gratitude and joy. These ten men, I say, ought, the instant they were cured, to have returned and thanked their Benefactor; this should have been their instinctive emotion; but, strange to say, nine snatched at the blessing, but went away and forgot the Blesser; one took the blessing and ran instantly to him who had given it, and burst forth into adoring gratitude and praise. And how did Jesus reply to him? "Go thy way," he said, "thy faith hath saved thee." The poor man was so charmed with the blessing that he was riveted to the spot in the presence of his Benefactor. I have no doubt the man felt, "This is such a change, such an evidence of power, that I will cleave to the skirts of this great and divine man's robes, so that everybody in the world shall see what he

has done for me, what change he has operated upon me; and thus all will believe him to be, what I know he is, the Messiah. But Jesus said, "Go thy way; this is not what I want; your home is empty, you are needed there; your shop is empty, you are needed there; your place is vacant, you are needed there: go thy way; fulfil the functions that God in his providence has given you; be a Christian tradesman, a Christian senator, a Christian shopkeeper, a Christian soldier or sailor; and thus you will glorify me more than by cleaving to me in this way, and saying how much I have done for you.

And who is this man, so thankful? Surely this must have been a rabbi; surely some one whose trumpet sounded in every synagogue, and whose phylactery was the brightest and broadest amid the worshippers; surely it was covered with texts, and the wearer almost canonized as a saint in Israel. You know well it was not. The Jew had the pure ordinances, the pure liturgy, the pure Bible, the right temple, and the right hill to build it on; the Samaritan accepted but the Pentateuch, or the Five Books of Moses, worshipped on the wrong hill, (Gerizim,) and was guilty in his alienation and separation from the true Israel; and yet this Samaritan was the Christian; the nine Jews showed that they were no Christians at all. It is possible to use the purest form, and not to pray at all; it is possible to be orthodox in our creed, and yet not to be Christians; it is quite possible to be raised to heaven in the enjoyment of the loftiest privileges, and to sink into the depths of hell by reason of our misuse and abuse of those privileges. It is not the privilege, but our use of it, that is of value. The Gospel of Matthew was written especially for the Jew; and the Gospel of Luke, which, with the Acts of the Apostles, (as every one knows who is acquainted with the ori-

ginal,) is the product of a highly educated mind, was written for the Gentile. Mark the design of it. The Jew was humbled by the thought that nine Jews were unthankful; and the Gentile, for whom this gospel was more especially designed, was encouraged, and drawn to Jesus, by this blessed instance of the Samaritan being accepted while the Jews were rejected.

Thus, the Samaritan glorified God, and thanked the Saviour for the great blessing he had experienced. And we read that his coming to thank him for a temporal mercy was made the occasion of his receiving a spiritual mercy; for Jesus added, “Go thy way, thy faith hath saved thee.” Here is a spiritual added to a temporal blessing. But it may be asked, Is faith a Saviour? Certainly not. Yet in Scripture every one must have noticed that the same things are attributed to faith that are attributed to the Saviour himself. Why is this? The explanation is simple. Christ is the refuge; faith runs to the refuge. Our faith saves us in this sense—that the refuge, as far as I am concerned, would be useless if I did not run to it. Christ is the living bread; faith eats that bread. It is my faith, in that sense, that nourishes me, because in vain there is bread if I do not eat of it. Christ is the medicine, the physician, the cure; faith goes to him, applies to him, accepts him. Faith saves me, because in vain there is medicine in the druggist’s shop, if it is not taken by the patient who suffers. Christ saves us meritoriously; faith saves us instrumentally. Christ is the Saviour; faith the hand that seizes, the feet that run, the eye that looks, the ear that hears, the heart that clings. Thus our faith saves us. Let us then learn this blessed lesson—that if we are thankful for the mercies that we have, we may expect new mercies to come. I believe God honours a thankful man, as he

honours also a happy man; and that he does not honour murmuring, thankless, complaining, and dissatisfied men. If our sins should humble us, our mercies should make us thankful. Sins can never be over-punished; mercies can never be over-acknowledged. In our sorest sufferings we have reason to be silent; in our least mercies we have reason to be thankful. I believe that he who is an unthankful possessor of mercies will not be a long possessor, or a quiet possessor. God treats your mercies as the bee treats the flower. The bee gathers its nutriment from the flower; and the flower, instead of being injured by the bee's application to it, is, as the botanists will tell you, positively benefited and nourished. We are to receive the blessing, but the tribute God exacts from us is the tribute of thanksgiving and praise. If our cup runs over, it is that the overflowing of it may reach those that need it, and that in the brightness of it we may see the face of him that filled it.

Let me gather one or two lessons from this. First, it is possible to receive temporal blessings from God, and yet none for the soul. Do not conclude, therefore, that because it is well with you in your temporal estate, it is necessarily well with you in your spiritual state. In the next place, adversity, tribulation, and affliction make those friends and brothers who formerly were enemies. We find there were here Jew and Samaritan together, when suffering a common calamity. But it is still possible to be as those described by God himself, "They poured out their prayer when under my chastening hand, but afterward they forgot me." Read some of the Psalms, and you will see how often the Jews were delivered, and how often they forgot their deliverer.

Let me apply this. Of those who have been spared in the epidemic that so severely smote our country so very

recently, how many are there who will not be a whit more spiritual, more devoted, more thankful! Think of this.

God expects thankfulness for the benefits we receive. Christ said, "Ten have got benefits; where are the nine?" So he said, "Lo, these three years I came seeking fruit from this fig-tree, and I find none." So he says of his vineyard, "I looked for grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." God looks at, and counts, and weighs the privileges, the opportunities, the means, the money, the influence, the blessings that we have; and he watches for the use we make of them; he waits for gratitude to acknowledge them, and for a good use to be made of them.

Let me next draw this lesson—that what your conscience shows to be right, when that conscience is enlightened by God's word, you must not hesitate to do because many do the very opposite. Nine laughed at the idea of returning to thank their Benefactor. No doubt they reasoned, as some newspapers reason on other benefits: "It is a change in the weather; it is a finer climate we have got into; no doubt, in going to the priest, we have eaten something that has agreed with us; or it is good exercise we have taken; it is a 'great law'; there is a change in the air, the weather has become colder, or warmer; and as for the idea of returning and thanking Jesus of Nazareth, why, the thing is absurd." And I have no doubt that the priests, and scribes, and Pharisees, and rulers of the land agreed with them, and laughed at and made excellent fun of that pious Samaritan, who felt the weather and its sunshine as they did, but returned amid all the weather, and saw that there was present in his cure the touch and the goodness of the Lord of life, the Healer of disease, the Fountain of health. In these times we must not mind standing alone. If nine thousand, or nine millions, should go the

wrong way, we must still go the right way. We must learn to be a peculiar people; we must not mind being scoffed at; we must not care if newspapers turn us into ridicule, if the whole world should mock at us. Hold by your duty; fix your hearts upon what is right, and true, and holy; and if the multitude laugh at you, pity them, and pray for them. "As for me," let your answer be, "I will serve the Lord."

## LECTURE IX.

## MATERNAL LOVE.

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilst. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.—MATT. xv. 21–28.

IN the Gospel of St. Mark, where the parallel passage occurs, and in which the same miracle is related, we read that our Lord would have no man know it, when he arrived at the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; but the more he seemed to conceal himself, the more he became known. It was indeed impossible that such light should be buried in a world of darkness, that so great a Physician should be unnoticed in a world of sickness, that the very Fountain of life, that overflowed with life, should not be approached where it was unsealed in a land where death revelled and spread around him the trophies of his all but almighty power. His name was as ointment poured forth, and its perfume penetrated all obstructions, and diffused itself over the length and breadth of the land. So will it be with

true Christians in their measure. Christianity cannot be hidden. To say one's Christianity is hidden, is equivalent to saying that there is none. If you live, life will develop itself; if grace be within you, that grace will show itself. Hide the sun, and conceal the stars, and you may hide the life and the love of God existing in your hearts.

This woman, who appealed to Christ, was a Canaanite, or a Syro-phenician, and therefore, of course, a Gentile. Her nation's history was dotted with judgments from the Lord; its guilt had risen to heaven and cried for vengeance, and corresponding retributions had lighted upon it; but in spite of all the guilt which cleaved to her land, in spite of all the estrangement which she inherited, as a Canaanite, from a country stained with infamy and sin, in spite of her own deep sense of personal demerit, she rushed to him under whose wings the guiltiest sinner, seeking forgiveness, may nestle, and in whose blood the greatest sin may be washed away. She fled to him, in spite of her sins that drew her back, and would have plunged her into despair, and sought forgiveness. I may notice that the difference between a conviction of sin that is saving, and a conviction of sin that is damning, is this—that the conviction of sin which is from beneath leads one to despair; on the other hand, the conviction of sin that God's Spirit implants carries us on the wings of an irresistible impulse to a Saviour's presence, there to pray and wait till these sins are forgiven.

This woman's prayer is in these words, "Have mercy on me, for my daughter is vexed with a devil." This state was not bodily sickness, or epilepsy, but literally, truly, an evidence that one of Satan's fallen spirits, that accompany him and act with him, inhabited and kept possession of the woman's soul. One reason that confirms this opinion, is the fact—that where God has a work of any kind in the

world, Satan, ever active, ever watchful, sets up a counterpart to it; wherever he sees God's coin in currency, he circulates his own forged and false coin. Thus we find, that when Moses did miracles, Pharaoh and those that were with him had their mimicry of them. When God's prophets prophesied, Satan's false prophets predicted too; and when God became incarnate, or manifest in the flesh, the devil made an effort to mimic it, and in his measure was incarnate, or manifest in the flesh, too. And now that we are in the dispensation of the Spirit, in which the Spirit of God, directly influencing the heart and making men Christians, is the grand characteristic, we shall see Satan also plunging people into fanaticism, skepticism, and monstrous delusions, so that, if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect, by his mimicry of God's work. It is evident that demoniac possessions were but one step in Satan's progression, and one among many proofs of his constant mimicry of God. That these were literally and strictly demoniac possessions is evident from this—the demons spoke to Christ; they left one person, and took up their habitation in another person; they asked questions; they deprecated judgment; and all the laws of fair, honest, common-sense interpretation must lead you to believe that they were literally fallen spirits that took up their abodes in fallen men. I do not believe there are demoniac possessions in that sense now; but I believe that there is Satanic influence in the great crimes that occasionally stain our land; and that these great crimes are suffered in the providence of God, just to lead us to see how the world would become a pandemonium, and men would become like devils, if God's restraining grace were withdrawn, and man and Satan left to work it out upon a world which sin has so stained and marred.

Her prayer, then, was, "Have mercy on me, for my

daughter is vexed with a devil." How beautifully is developed here a mother's affection to her child! She seeks mercy for herself, because her daughter is vexed with a devil: she thus identifies herself with her daughter; what would be deliverance to the one would be mercy to the other. She bare her daughter's burden, as Christians are still taught to bear each other's burdens; or perhaps she thought—rightly or wrongly it is not for me to say—that her own sins had brought this judgment on her daughter; perhaps from a superstitious feeling, such as that manifested by the disciples, when they asked, "Who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" she may have thought that her daughter was thus vexed because she herself had so sinned.

But let us learn the lesson that her appeal teaches. Her tribulation led her to her Saviour. As it is true of sin, so also of afflictions—for the affliction that leads us from God deeper into the world for its opiates, its stimulants, or its follies, is unsanctified; but the affliction—national, domestic, or personal—that leads us to Jesus that he may forgive it first, and sanctify us next, is a visitation for which we shall have to bless God throughout eternity: it has an apostle's mission, and it has in it the superintendence of an apostle's Lord.

Our Lord, we are told, when he heard the woman's appeal, "answered her not a word." This was unusual; it startled the poor petitioner; she had heard of his infinite beneficence; she had seen the miracles which strewed his path; and she could not understand how, if others had applied, and Almighty Beneficence had responded to their appeal, that she should apply, and silence, which, in her judgment, was equivalent to a refusal, should be all the reception she could obtain. Many times, in our experience, we cannot explain God's proceedings; many a time

we have to trust where we cannot trace ; many a time we must wait and wonder, and wonder and wait ; but just as often, after we have long wondered and long waited, a still small voice comes from the oracles of heaven, “Stand still, and see the salvation of God.” Be not rash to judge God. Do not construe rapidly, lest you misconstrue. Behind a frowning cloud he often hides a smiling face.

“The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.”

Let us wait. The woman no doubt felt deeply discouraged, but she did not despair. Though Christ was silent she persisted still ; so much so that “his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away ; for she crieth after us.” At the first blush one would say, “Here are the disciples pleading for her. How good these men must have been ! how sympathizing thus to interpose and plead !” But it was not love that made them say so. “Send her away.” Why ? “Give her what she wants, and send her away ;”—because she is needy, because she is faint ? No, but “because she crieth after us.” Just so it is with mankind. When a very importunate beggar comes after them, they fling him sixpence, not out of love to the beggar, or pity for his sorrows, but in order to get rid of him—one of the most inhuman methods of giving what is popularly called “charity” that one can possibly adopt. If we cannot give sixpence, give a kind word, say something encouraging or comforting ; and whenever we do give, let the kindness of our words be at least equal to the amount of our gift. The disciples, then, out of selfishness, not sympathy—out of self-love, not love—wished to send her away, saying, She torments us ; she is interfering with our comfort ; “she crieth after us.” But Jesus did not answer the disciples according to their wish, any more than he did the woman according to hers ; but “he

answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Of course this is true, because Christ said it; but what is the explanation of a statement which seems to us at first somewhat contradictory? The explanation lies in this—that his personal ministry had a specialty in it; it was restricted almost exclusively to Judea: but that this was not the ultimate design of his gospel is plain from his last words, "Go ye, and teach *all* nations, baptizing them [or, literally, go and disciple all nations, baptizing them] in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." In another place he says, "Go ye into all the world;" showing that his mission was to be commensurate with the world. The meaning then of the expression, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," is, plainly, that his personal ministry was restricted, for great, wise, and righteous ends, to the land of Judea. Almost all his miracles were done there; almost all his bright and beautiful and precious discourses were preached there; his birth was there, his life was there, and his death was there: and those instances of Gentiles tasting of his goodness, which are here and there scattered over his life and ministry, were but foreshadows of what will be—earnests and first-fruits of the great future. It was to teach the Jew, that while, in compliance with the purposes of heaven, his personal ministry was to be restricted to the land of Judæa, when that ministry was done, the Spirit should be poured out, to be bounded only by the bound-lines of humanity, and be carried

"From sea to sea, and shore to shore,  
Till suns should rise and set no more."

The woman however, when she heard this remark made by our Lord to his disciples, was not discouraged: for, it is said, "she came and worshipped him." I do not know that that was religious worship; I think it must have been

the respect she had to a great and superior being. "Lord," (or Master,) she said, "help me." The more she was repulsed, the closer she crept to him; the more he seemed to treat her petitions with indifference, the more intensely she charged that petition with the expression of her sorrow, her sympathy, and her wants. At last Christ speaks. But if his silence damped her feelings, his speech must have discouraged her still more. He said, "Is it meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs?" No doubt this was a proverbial expression used among the Jews, to denote a sense of their national superiority and greatness over other nations; but, whether or not the Jews were regarded as nationally God's adoption, they were the children of Abraham by profession, and their responsibility was to be so really and truly. Our Lord, then, adopts the phrase—which does not imply that he called the Gentiles dogs, and the Jews children—and speaks in words which that Gentile had been accustomed to, "Why, you know, it is an aphorism which you have heard, that it is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs." It is a curious fact, worth stating, and rather remarkable, that throughout the whole Bible the nobler qualities of the dog are never referred to, but only his worst qualities. I do not know why it is. We know that the dog has some of the noblest qualities of any animal, but in Scripture the frequent illustration is drawn from his baser ones. The Gentiles are called by the Jews dogs; and you recollect one said, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do such a thing?" Our Lord says, then, "If the children are entitled to bread, it is not meet to take it from them, and cast it to the dogs." This was enough to daunt any one; but so rooted in her heart was confidence in him, and so ardent was her attachment to her child, that she turned the very repulse that Jesus uttered into a reason for ap-

proaching him yet more closely and confidentially, and pleading more eloquently with him. She draws, in fact, an argument in her favour from what seemed against her; with the ready wit that deep feeling ever generates, she made what would have been a dissuasive into a persuasive. The ear of love hears what the ear of the ordinary man cannot; and her ear and her heart heard an undertone of "yea" in the loud-spoken accents that breathed only "nay." She argues, therefore, as much as to say, "I admit I am a Gentile; I admit I am called a dog; nay, I will assume that I am really what the proverb calls me; but this, instead of excluding me from food, is an argument for giving me food. Is it not the experience of humanity, that if the children sit round the table and eat, the dogs come and lie down beside them, and get the crumbs that fall from the table? I do not ask a child's place; but give me the dog's place, and I am content. It is a law that the dog shall have food as well as the child; therefore, blessed Master, your argument, your remark, your application of this proverb, only teaches me that I am within the reach of thy mercies, not without them." Just as the poor prodigal said, "Make me a hired servant, if it be only under thy roof, and not a son." Thus she says, "Call me a dog, but give me a dog's portion, and I shall be abundantly satisfied."

We too must learn, in using the promises of Scripture and turning them into prayer, fully to admit the truth of all that God says; and even from his frowns, his chastisements, his judgments, fetch new arguments, and point new appeals for mercy and forgiveness. And does God call this presumption? No. We may call it so, but he never does. He waits to be gracious; he longs to hear a people's prayer, that he may let loose upon that people showers of benedictions.

How did the woman succeed then? Just as all ever do who may imitate her example. She conquered. This is the victory that overcometh the world—one might add, that overcometh God—even our faith. Jacob wrestled with the angel of the covenant a whole night, and Jacob overcame; and he was called Israel, because he had prevailed with God. You say, “How can prayer have such power?” It has no power in itself. The brass serpent on the pole had no virtue in itself; but if God is pleased to command it, it is ours to pray, and his to give.

The thought here suggests itself—how was it that this woman was so differently treated from others in almost similar circumstances? To one he offered mercy before it was asked; to another, he complied with the request the moment it was made; but to this woman he gave repulse upon repulse. And why? He knew each man’s case, and, like a skilful physician, he adapted himself to each man’s (if you will allow the word) idiosyncrasy. He knew the tenacity of her faith before he tried it. And he knew Abraham’s faith before he tried Abraham; he knew quite well (and this meets the infidel’s objection) that Abraham would not be obliged to sacrifice the child, but that his confidence in God would triumph and prevail. He knew, therefore, that having such tenacity of faith to deal with, he might teach a lesson to us who read the glory, while he was trying the strength of that woman’s faith upon the shores of Canaan.

It is interesting also here to remark, that we have throughout a striking illustration of the great strength of the woman’s faith. In the case of the paralytic, recorded in the Gospel of Mark, we find faith or confidence in the Lord breaking through all physical obstructions. When they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken

it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. We have also in the case of blind Bartimeus, who came to Christ that he might recover his sight, an instance of faith overcoming hostile obstructions thrown in his way by those who were near the Saviour. Many charged him that he should hold his peace, but Bartimeus cried the more, "Have mercy on me, thou Son of David." But in the case of the woman, we have an instance of faith overcoming obstructions, not physical, as those of the paralytics were, not personally hostile, as those of Bartimeus were, but obstructions apparently in Christ himself. Well, therefore, and truly did he say to her, "Great is thy faith; be it unto thee as thou wilt."

Now let us draw one or two lessons from the whole of this miracle. This woman, we have said, was an inhabitant of Canaan, a Syro-phenician, a Gentile, not within the Jewish covenant. There are Christian brethren where we think not, and oft see not; there are believers in the worst of circumstances, Christians in the most unpromising of all communions; there are gems in the depths of the sea which have never reflected the sunshine; there are flowers in the untrodden desert; there are Christians in heathendom; there are Protestants in the midst of the Papal Apostasy; unknown, are weak things that will yet be monuments of God's power, and defective things that will yet be the trophies of God's strength. Let us not judge according to sense, but judge righteous judgment; and rejoice that there will come to God, and sit down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, strangers to us, and also to communions within whose walls, in our bigotry and exclusiveness, we imagined there was exclusive salvation.

Let us also draw the lesson—a very important one—that

afflictions bring those to the Saviour whom prosperity would keep away. This woman's child, suffering under a terrible judgment, was the means of this woman's applying to a Saviour for acceptance for herself, and cure for her child. We know quite well, when we have lost some near and dear one, how it dims the glory of this world. Never does man feel money to be so utterly worthless as when he is labouring under the deep pain of some great, sorrowful bereavement. These things are sent just to dim the world's sheen, to darken the world's glory, to weaken the world's attractions. Sorrow washes away from the eye the films that intercept the light of the countenance of God. Affliction is the furnace into which we are thrown, that the oxides contracted in this world may be burned off, and that on the pure gold that remains there may be struck the image and reflected the likeness and the glory of our God. He has sharp-cutting tools—the sword, the pestilence, the noisome beast, and the famine. These cutting tools and files he uses for polishing his own jewels; and those very jewels that he means to reflect his glory most brightly, and that he deems the most precious in his cabinet, are those on which these rough tools will be oftenest; and the brighter the ultimate lustre, the longer will the workman be in polishing. Many a one, therefore, will say in heaven, what perhaps he cannot now say, “It was good for me that I have been afflicted.” Let us not forget that the evidence that an affliction, or judgment, national, social, or personal, has been sanctified to us, is what it leaves behind—not what we feel now, precious as that is, but what it leaves behind. We know when the storm, and the wind, and the rain burst upon your garden in the winter, all the effect is seen in pools, decaying leaves, fragments of wreck, and wide disorder, with no intervening hope, at that moment, of a change; but when the storm comes in summer, in

showers and heavy rain, it falls upon the flowers, the trees, and the leaves; and it is no sooner over than the sun breaks forth again, and the flowers look only more beautiful for the bath which they have enjoyed. So fall afflictions on those to whom they are not, and on those to whom they are sanctified. In the case of those to whom they are not sanctified, they are the winter storms that leave but wreck, and misery, and chaos; but to those to whom they are blessed, they are as the summer storm that beautifies, not blasts, the vegetation on which it falls. Bereavement, and affliction, and judgment, make the thoughtless think, and the prayerless pray, and the thinking think more deeply, and the praying pray more fervently; till all add, as an expression of their blessed experience, "It was good for me that I was afflicted."

We learn another lesson. The spiritual and temporal prosperity of all with whom we are associated by ties of relationship, neighbourhood, country, kith, or kin, should be most dear to us, and should be borne upon our hearts when we draw near to God. This woman brought her daughter to the Saviour along with herself. The *help me* is associated with *help her*. She fulfilled the royal law of bearing one another's burdens. We, too, should fulfil the royal law in another formula, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

This is not all. True Christians do, and may, and will meet with many discouragements in prayer. Some say to me, "I cannot pray as I could wish; when I attempt to pray, doubts, distractions, wanderings, come into my mind, and perplex me." Let me instruct you that, if you could pray as you could wish, you would not be in the church militant but in the church triumphant; if you were what you would be, this would not be grace, but glory. Thus these are evidences of grace—not your doubts, and your

distractions, but your sense of and sorrow for them. He, therefore, who has learned from his prayers that he has never prayed as he should, and cannot now pray as he would, has been taught a precious lesson, for it will humble him, and lead him to pray for that strength which is made perfect in weakness, and for that aid which exalts the lowly and abases only the proud.

Another lesson that we may draw from this interesting miracle is, that the people of God are to persevere in prayer. God does not say, "Ask once, and I will give;" he says, "Ask, and ye shall obtain; seek, and ye shall find; knock, (an intenser expression,) and it shall be opened unto you." God has not said that you shall have an answer after you have prayed one, twice, or thrice; he has merely promised to give an answer. It is yours to pray, and to persist in prayer—not long prayer, not many words, but the deep, fervent utterance of a heart that feels deeply and prays truly—God will answer that prayer sooner or later. So it was with this woman: she was repulsed once, twice, thrice, but she persisted; she had perseverance; and, at last, she found that the stream that had been only banked up, in the end burst forth from its channel and overflowed in more glorious abundance. She felt, what you will feel, that the blessings you have long asked for, and which have been long delayed, will at length come down exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask, or think, or desire. Persist, then, in prayer; pray always, and not faint. Hear what the apostle says, that men should "pray always;" that men should "pray at all times;" that men should "pray without fear or doubting;" that they should "pray everywhere;" that they should pray "with all perseverance." And pray for what? "Whatsoever things ye have need of." Now whatever be the sorrow that lies nearest any heart in this assembly,

whatever be the burden that is heaviest, whatever be the suffering that is most pungent and poignant—pray that that may be removed. It is right, it is duty, it is privilege. Some say, “I don’t know if it be good for me that it should be removed.” That is not your business; it is God’s. What God asks is that we shall disclose to him our deep wants, whatever these wants may be; leaving to him to determine in his wisdom what is best and most expedient for us. If you do not ask temporal blessings, you are saying that the blessings of the footstool are not worth having. But is not health an inestimable blessing? Is not “neither poverty nor riches, but food convenient for us,” an inestimable blessing? Is not protection and preservation from danger a blessing? Ask these things, then, that he would feed you with daily bread, that he would save you from “the terror by night, and the arrow that flieth by day;” that he would keep you under his feathers; that he would give you all good things. Mother, pray for the child; child, pray for the mother; healthy, pray for the sick; ask temporal blessings, ask them fully, as children of a Father; and when you ask them, do not trouble yourself with thinking, “I am afraid to ask, because I do not know whether it will be good for me.” You are thus intruding into God’s seat: you must leave with him to determine whether it be good for you. It is for you to lay bare your aching heart and its deep wants, in the presence of your Father; and you will find what peace and comfort there is in the thought, “I have told him what I feel honestly to be the want that is deepest; I leave it with him who knows all things completely, to give it when and how he pleases, or to withhold it when it seems to him most expedient.” I believe we have many wrong views of prayer. We ask things, and doubt whether it is right to ask them or not. Ask every thing you honestly

believe you have need of. Leave it to God, and he will withhold as his wisdom may see to be most expedient. Do not intrude into God's province; take the suppliant's part; for "whatsoever things ye have need of" you are to ask for; you are to pray "in all things." "Is any man afflicted? Let him pray. Is any man merry? Let him sing psalms." Let every thing bring you to God; and tell your heavenly Father of all the wants you feel that he may relieve them. Not that prayer is necessary because God needs information of what you want. He knows it; but it is his law, it is his arrangement, that whatever you want you are to tell him of it, and he will give it exceeding abundantly. And if he give you not that very thing which you ask, he will give you something ten times better; he will never give you worse than you ask, but always better. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Do not think that God's delay is unwillingness: his willingness is infinite; his unwillingness is seeming, his willingness is real; his seeming unwillingness is to make you do as the Canaanite woman did—persevere; his willingness waits to bestow more than we can ask or think. Do not, then, argue, as some have ignorantly and skeptically argued, that God knows what we want, and that if he is determined to give it, he will give it without prayer; and that if he is determined not to give it, it is of no use to pray for it. That is atheism. We are, my dear friends, to feel satisfied that God, in his decrees and eternal purposes, has resolved to give to prayer what he is resolved not to give without prayer. Prayer may be one of the wheels on which his purposes move to performance. It is his law—a law that we are under, and that we are to receive—that if we ask not we shall not obtain; and it is

his law, equally explicit, that if we ask we shall obtain. All that he requires of you is the unfeigned, earnest, sincere, persevering disclosure of all your wants—your little wants, and your great wants: for do not think, as some think, of his providence, that it takes care of kings, but does not condescend to beggars—that it takes care of empires, and not of atoms—that it takes care of the leviathan, but not of the emmet or the fly. God's providence embraces all things—rises to the greatest, and descends to the minutest—is in the disclosures of the microscope, as well as the discoveries of the telescope. So with reference to prayer; God hears prayer for little things as well as for great things; and little things may be the hinges on which great ones turn. Therefore, the lesson that I would again repeat, is, whatsoever ye want or need, ask and pray for, at all times, every where—lifting up holy hands, nothing doubting that the hearer of prayer will hear and answer. So our experience on earth, and our retrospect for glory, will equally prove that we never sincerely and earnestly prayed in vain.

## LECTURE X.

## THE CALMER OF THE STORM.

And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!—MATT. viii. 23-27.

MANY of the miracles on which I have lectured have related to the diseases of the body, to which Christ was the great Physician; and the death of that body, to which he had proved himself the life. This miracle relates not to disease or to death in the experience of man, but to another of the effects of sin, the storms and tempests, or dis-harmony of nature, of which he alone is the queller, and from which he alone will one day retrieve her.

It appears that Jesus, as stated in the record of the miracle here given, went into a ship. Never, certainly, did the waves of the sea bear a more precious burden; never had ship constructed by man a more glorious passenger; it was the glory of that sea that its bosom bore him; it was an honour to those winds that they were permitted to waft him; for it was not one that had shared with them in nature's shock, but one who made it holy,—for “all things were made by him,”—and came to right it, for he is the great Redeemer of all things.

It appears that when he was in this ship, a storm arose.

The sea, commonly called so, is a large loch or lake; it was inland, but of great extent; and, like all inland seas, as one may be aware, subject to tempestuous hurricanes, that rushed down the mountain gorges unexpectedly, and very frequently buried large vessels in its waters. It appears that one of these gales or storms smote the ship in which Jesus and his disciples were. The fishermen, or the sailors, plainly felt it to be no common or ordinary storm, by the very fact that they appealed to him for deliverance. A sailor will never take foreign help as long as he has a muscle that he can use, or a rag of canvas that he can hoist, or an effort that his skill, his genius, or his physical powers can have recourse to. Whenever a sailor has recourse to foreign help on the sea, it is generally evidence that he has given up all for lost. These men were accustomed to storms and tempests, and, no doubt, would not have appealed to Jesus for miraculous deliverance unless they had been fully conscious that human strength was weakness, human skill was folly, and that without such interposition all was hopeless.

We gather from these facts that the presence of Christ, near and dear to his people, does not exempt them from affliction. Christ has promised to conduct us to an everlasting and glorious haven; but he has not promised that we shall also have a fair wind, a smooth sea, and a delightful and serene passage. The passage may indeed be tempestuous, but the haven will certainly be reached; and often the storm by the way is a necessary element in that process by which we are fitted for the enjoyment of the haven that is before us. No one so enjoys the calm harbour as the long tempest-tossed sailor; no one so enjoys his home as the weary traveller who has come many a mile to reach it; and the Christian will find heaven not to be the less sweet, but the more so, that he has buffeted many

a wind, passed through many a storm, and often felt thoroughly persuaded that there was no hope or deliverance for him. He shall then find these tempests not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed; he will then discover that each trial was just as necessary for him as that Christ should have died for him; and instead of being a random accident in disturbed nature, it was a messenger sent from on high to help him on his journey, without whose help he might never have reached the end.

Jesus, it is said, in the midst of the tempest which he and his disciples shared, was asleep on the stern, or hinder part of the ship. Jonah once slept in the ship, in the midst of a storm; but his sleep was the result of the opiate of a dead and benumbed conscience. Jesus slept in the storm, but his sleep was because of a pure, an innocent, and holy conscience. Jonah was the cause of the storm in which he was; Jesus was the queller of the storm in which he was. One was a fugitive from God; the other was a messenger of God, coming to do God's work, and gather in God's people, and glorify God's name. And may we not see from all this, that the church of Christ, and the people of God, may very often seem to be almost cast off—the winds awake, the waves arise, as if some evil power roused the one and lashed the other to their utmost fury; and what aggravates their state and magnifies their peril is, that he who alone can quell those waves, and hush those winds, is asleep—and in fact seems not to regard them. It was in such circumstances that the believer, in the Psalms, called out, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? How long wilt thou forsake me, O Lord?" Yet let Christ seem to have forgotten his people—let there be no Divine word sent from the sky, announcing deliverance—let there be no rainbow spanning it, intimating that the storm is about to pass away—let there be no prescrip-

tion dropped from above, to show us that the disease is about to be healed—let all seem desperate, there is no depth into which man can be plunged in which he should not pray, and there is no depth or distance from God, to which affliction may drive him, in which prayer may not be heard; for it was when the storm was in its fury, and Jesus was asleep, that they cried, in their agony, “Lord, save us! Carest thou not that we perish?” And yet in that petition of these poor fishermen, while there was faith, there was also a mixture of infirmity. They said, “Save us; we perish.” They thought that Christ and they would perish; but how impossible is that! Christ, and his people whom he knows—some of them born and re-born; others of them born, but not re-born; others of them not yet born, or re-born; some circumcised, and others uncircumcised; some circumcised, like Abraham; some baptized, like Paul, but not circumcised; and some neither, but yet chosen in him before the foundation of the world, the members of his living body, the ransom of his precious blood; they are all safe as if they were already in heaven; for he himself hath said, “I give unto them eternal life, and none shall be able to pluck them out of my hand.”

The Lord, it is said, when appealed to, addressed the men, and rebuked them gently and tenderly for weakness: “O ye of little faith.” It was not the evidence of their little faith that they appealed to Christ, but that they were so alarmed, as to be almost overpowered and overwhelmed by that alarm. Then, it is said, he arose and rebuked the winds. When does Christ interpose to help us? Just when we have come to learn the lesson that we cannot help ourselves. Never does a Christian know what strength is till he feels what his utter, entire weakness is in the sight of God. It is then that in weakness he is made strong. Have we not had something to transfer

the illustration of the miracle to an analogous case? Have we not had something like this in our recent experience? Just at the time that the late epidemic was darkening more and more our horizon, the registrar-general wrote, "Now we can see light;" and the very two weeks during which he saw light were the darkest of all. At the very time that the *Times* paper and others said, "Now we have turned the corner," that very time the victims fell in greater numbers. Nostrum followed nostrum, prescription was published after prescription, till men were more likely to be poisoned by men's prescriptions than to be smitten down by God's pestilence. There was cleansing, watering, flushing, de-odorizing, disinfecting, shutting up pestilential *foci*, (all most important in their places, and it is only a pity they were not done before;) every effort was made, yet they found that they were stopping up one leak, while a dozen were starting out besides. There was great faith in physicians, great faith in preventive measures, but little faith in, and scarcely a whisper of, an appeal to Him who kills and makes alive; till at length the multiplying victims, mown down on every side, began to teach man his helplessness. The conquering epidemic rode from the lane to the well-paved street, from the cellar to the noble's hall, and from the filthy place, where they said its *habitat* was, and out of which it dared not come, it entered the most splendid drawing-rooms; it touched even the judicial bench, and picked out its victims there; till, in short, the pestilence, like Death upon the pale horse in the Apocalypse, rode forth, conquering on all sides, with terror in his van, and death in his rear. Then men saw what their nostrums and specifics were worth—their faith in man, their trust in physic; till at last a nation, in its helplessness, flung all behind it, and rushed, in a nation's agony, and gave

utterance to a nation's prayers, in ten thousand temples, "Lord, save us; we perish." And the Lord stretched out his hand, and stayed the plague, and "there was a great calm." God has been teaching us first to feel our helplessness, and then to rejoice in our deliverance.

Do not draw from what I say any inference that I disapprove of all the efforts that have been made. On the contrary, I am one of those who believe that God sent this judgment just to teach the rich, the great, the noble, of all ranks, that they have neglected their duties, that they have left the poor to starve, or to live and to be housed like brutes, instead of each person looking round his hall, his park, his palace, his residence, remembering that if God has made him more rich, it is that some very poor one may be bettered; and that if God has given him more comforts, it is that those who have none may get some. I believe that this is one of the great lessons to be gathered from the judgment, and I hope it will not be forgotten. At the same time it does seem to me, while we have been taught this, we have been taught also to recognise the finger of God. He has crowded physicians, and skill, and talent, and prevention, and all other measures into one humble, lowly place; and from the graves of the victims, and the homes of the spared, the weepers because of lost ones, and the rejoicers because of spared ones, have learned this truth, which I think is deeper engraved upon our country's heart than ever it was engraved before—that we are saved and kept healthy, and blessed, and prospered, not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the physician in his skill, nor the statesman in his policy; but let him that glorieth glory only in the Lord: and let all learn—what we have forgotten—that we are not under the dominion of those contemptible gods of the

Pantheon of the nineteenth century, called "laws of nature;" but that we are under the dominion of Him who reigns in heaven, and rules amid the inhabitants of the earth, and who turneth the hearts of kings whithersoever he will. These are noble lessons. If we have learned them, as I trust many have, we shall bless God for the pestilence that laid so many below the ground in 1849, because of the beneficent and precious lessons it taught to so many who yet live.

Jesus arose, it is said, and rebuked the wind and the wave. The Physician rebuked the disease; the Creator rebuked the storms of creation. Whether the word "rebuke," which is often applied to the miracles of Christ, when he speaks to nature, means that there was any living agency concerned, it is perhaps difficult to say. It seems as if it taught us that storms and tempests are the results of some usurping powers that have come into the world. We know that Satan is the god of this world; we know that he is trying to grasp the sceptre which he cannot hold; and that he intrudes and does mischief wherever he is permitted, and has power to do so. Whether it be that the Lord looked upon these storms as the mere expression of a malignant agency beneath, and rebuked the evil powers because of what had taken place, I cannot say. Perhaps it was that he looked upon nature as his own child. "The sea is his," says the Psalmist, "and he made it;" and then, when he spoke to the winds, they folded their wings and slept beside him, recognising in the words of Jesus the voice of him that gave them their creation and their commission at the first; and when the waves heard that voice, they lay like babes beside a mother, gentle, and obedient to him whose is the sea, and whose also is the dry land: and they showed how truly David wrote, when he sang by the Spirit of David's Lord, "Thou rulest the raging of the

sea; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." And how beautifully the same David wrote in another place: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

What Jesus did on this occasion was not, let me remind you, as I have done before, was not a mere miraculous feat: it was also a prophetic fact. No act of Jesus was finished when it was done; each was a foreshadow of a grand result yet to be. All things, I believe, are far more typical than we think them; all facts are pregnant with effects yet more glorious than we see. There is no such thing as a dead fact; it is always living and prolific; and whatever Jesus did, especially, was significant of something yet brighter and better than Jesus will do. So then, the fact that he quelled the storm is only an earnest of that better day, when the great Peacemaker will come forth like the high-priest from the holy of holies, and screw up creation's strings to their primeval harmony, bring all things back to their Eden bliss, give the wind and waves and sea a new and a Divine commission, recover and resume the sceptre, expel the disturber, reverse the curse, strip nature of her ashen garments, in which she has wept and groaned, a pe-

nitent and a sufferer, and put on her coronation robes, her bridal apparel, when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come; and all nature shall be made glad. We believe that this will be so, not merely from this fact that is an earnest of it, but because the Lord Jesus himself has expressly said so. And at this moment, as in the past, his arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear. In the midst of storms and tempests we may seek of him a calm; in sorrow, and sickness, and suffering, we may pray for help. We ought to ask for temporal blessings absolutely, as we ask for spiritual blessings. It is God's part to determine, in his wisdom, what he will give and what he will withhold; it is our part simply to disclose the felt and the deep wants of our soul, and ask him to supply them. If therefore any one is ill, and wants help, pray for it; if any of us be poor and starving, and need bread, pray for it; if any of us have a relative suffering and ill, pray for his recovery, and pray in faith; it is ours to pray; it is God's part to determine what he will give. Do not say, "But is this expedient? Is this according to the will of God?" That is not your business. Ask what your conscience, enlightened by God's word, shows you to be, or that seems to you to be good; ask what you really need, and leave it with God to give or withhold as to him may seem most expedient. He authorized us to seek all temporal blessings, when he taught us to say, "Give us daily bread;" he enjoined us to seek all spiritual blessings, when he taught us to say, "Forgive us our trespasses." Temporal blessings are the blessings of the footstool; spiritual blessings are the blessings of the throne: let us ask both. God has given us a body as well as a soul, and he means that there should be provision for the one as well as for the other. Ask for both, and ask in faith; do not doubt; and if his wisdom do not always give you the pre-

cise thing that you ask, his goodness will give you a better thing, exceeding abundantly above all you can ask: thus his name will be glorified, and you will be blessed.

It is on these accounts that I again refer to another topic, on which I say so much because I wish that it may be sanctified, and never forgotten. We have ourselves had evidence that God answers the prayers of the people. We see how rapidly the prevalent epidemic has decreased ever since the nation began earnestly to pray. And I rejoice to say that the public newspapers now begin to show a holier feeling on the subject. I may perhaps be pardoned, if I read a short extract from one of them, which has been most refreshing to my mind. I have said that most of the papers were asserting this cause, and that cause, and that no doubt the cold weather would abate the disease; yet hot weather actually came, and yet there was a decrease; but one paper has changed its tone—the leading paper of the age, and remarkable, not for originating public feeling, but—and nothing but this would justify my reading the extract here—for being the exponent of it. I refer to it (and I do not speak disrespectfully of its great talent when I say so) just as I should quote the weathercock, not as the cause of the wind blowing in a certain direction, but simply as the evidence of it. This great daily paper, after battling a long time to account for the disease on every principle but the right one, and hesitating about the propriety of a day of national prayer, at last writes an article which seems to compensate for all the mischief it has done; and for which I thank God, because I regard it not as the expression of the individual writer's feelings, but as the forced utterance of what the writer knows to be the nation's heart, the popular feeling, the universal sympathy.

“It would be as impossible,” says the *Times* of Thursday, September 27th, “to exaggerate the sentiment of

gratitude which is felt throughout the metropolis at the abatement of the pest from which we are beginning to escape, as it would be to exaggerate the misery which its further continuance would have inflicted. The plague is stayed. Death strikes with a feeble and fitful hand where he so lately smote with so fearful a force. Terror and despondence, the satellites and companions of Death, are flying before the power which has destroyed the gaunt destroyer. The streets, which still bear the aspect of mourning and sadness, no longer witness the daily insignia of mortality. One meets, indeed, in every place, the memorials of irreparable losses, and the tokens of lasting grief, [all this indicates what a terrible moment we have passed through.] In the throng of the Exchange, in the great thoroughfares, in the crowded streets, we jostle against those who have, within a few days, lost their nearest and dearest kin. One man, a week ago the happy husband or proud father, has since followed wife and children to the grave. The prattle of infancy and the soft accents of affection have been suddenly hushed in a thousand homes. A havoc has been wrought in innumerable families which a long life will fail to repair. But the plague is already stayed; and, great as the calamity may have been, it is slight compared with what old traditions and modern experience taught us to expect. London has escaped with half the loss sustained in Paris, and a tithe of the destruction which ravaged Moscow, Petersburg, or Delhi.

“A termination almost so un hoped for has filled men’s hearts with gratitude. They recognise in the mercy that has arrested the hand of the destroying angel the salvation of this country from all those, the moral and material ills, which have ever followed in the train of great pestilences. Had the disease remained among us for any time

without abatement, experience tells us it could hardly have remained without increase. The mortality, which had risen from the usual weekly average of nine hundred to three thousand, would not have remained many weeks as low as three thousand. Had it gone on in the same ratio of increase, it is hardly too much to say that whole districts in the metropolis and its suburbs would have been laid bare and desolate. True, this would have happened among the abodes of the very poor. But would the consequences of the affliction have been restricted to those spots? Could whole families have been plunged in destitution, and whole parishes have been desolated by panic, in the offskirts of a huge city, without infecting the other and healthier elements of society? Impossible! Of the plague which has already, we trust, spent its worst malignity, the deaths which it caused were not the sole nor the most terrible result. The great historian of Greece has depicted in indelible colours the moral which goes hand in hand with the physical pest. We, as a nation, indeed, may not be in the same state as that refined and volatile people which erected altars to 'The Unknown God.' But, can any one who knows any thing of our great cities, and especially of our greatest, say that, were a pest let loose with unmitigated violence on them or in it, the mere destruction of human life would measure the havoc and the calamity endured? Would the poorer masses of our population go untainted by that same utter recklessness of all save present gain and present enjoyment—the same indifference to death or life—honour or dishonour—good or evil—which poisoned the minds of the Athenians more than the plague destroyed their bodies? The historian of the Great Plague of London bears testimony to the frightful immorality, hardness of heart, and savage recklessness which disputed with piety, contrition, and repent-

ance, the dominion over men's minds. In our age the vast increase of population, the more than proportionate increase of luxury and wealth—the great contrast of conditions and fortunes, have all raised up elements of discord, contention, and bitter strife, which were unknown in De Foe's time, but which, in a wide-spread pestilence, might now ferment into anarchy and ruin. The metropolis could not have suffered alone. It would have infected all England. We have escaped these evils. We have escaped panic. We have escaped anarchy. We have escaped national convulsions [what grounds of gratitude!] There have, doubtless, been great suffering, privation, destitution, and despair inflicted on us. There have likewise been much hardness, selfishness, and cruelty elicited by it. But, still, how little have these been compared with the probable and almost inevitable consequences of a heavier and wider mortality!"

But I wish especially to refer to what follows :

" And, if this be, as we believe it to be, the case, does not an occasion so solemn deserve an expression of sentiments so profound ? Should there not be some public and universal recognition of the Might which has stood between the living and the dead—of the Mercy which has spared us the consummation of a dreadful chastisement ? We know that there are men who refuse to acknowledge the hand of God in any great dispensation of his providence,—to whom all the vicissitudes of the material world are but the casual results of fortuitous combinations, or the inevitable operations of undetected laws. Fortunately, the majority of mankind have not concurred in ousting the Deity from all concern in the world which he has made. Most men still feel sensible that there is One, omniscient and all-powerful, who directs and determines the issues of life and death to men and nations. It is

useless to talk of secondary causes. Secondary causes are but the instruments which the Deity chooses to employ. Sickness, famine, and death, are warnings by which he reminds mankind of their weakness, their helplessness, and their mortality. Every man feels this in his own family, person, and circumstances. The sickness that hurries a favourite child or an affectionate wife to an early grave is an humbling but effective example of Divine power and human weakness. The palsy that prostrates the strong man in the full flush of health and vigour—the distress and poverty which stun the rich man in the height of his prosperity—these are but secondary, often tertiary causes; they may often be traced step by step through devious but connected consequences; but each man, in his own heart, feels them to be the indications of a supreme will and the tokens of supreme power. And when these befall individuals, the prayer is put up in an earnest confidence that He who has inflicted the wound—though he may not heal it—will yet temper the infliction with a blessing.

“Doubtless the cholera, like any other phenomenon, either of the corporeal or the mundane system, follows certain definite and ascertainable laws. So does typhus fever, so do hurricanes, so do waterspouts, so do thunderstorms, so do earthquakes. But the laws of which we speak are but a convenient phrase to express the will of the great Lawgiver. He who made can abate, modify, suspend, or warp them. He who can bid a plague rise in the East, may direct its sinuous course so as to baffle the observations of the most sagacious and the deductions of the most intelligent. After all, when we have ascertained the law, we are nearly as helpless as we were before. We may foresee a certain number of cases and mitigate a certain number; but the highest degree of knowledge which

we attain is, that we know but little about them; and our utmost skill is baffled by contingencies which defy its explanation. One fact ever appears prominent above the rest—that we are in the hands of a higher Power.

“And this is a merciful dispensation. Without such, men would stagnate into a moral apathy, and, forgetting the existence of a God, would forget the duties which he has enjoined. It is by these visitations that men are reminded that they are weak. But they are also reminded that they are accountable. There never yet was a great national affliction without some previous neglect of public or private duties. The very plague which has visited us was made more violent by the omission of kindly acts, and the neglect of beneficent laws. The loss of life and the loss of money which we are suffering are penalties by which Almighty Wisdom punishes the delinquencies of governments and states. Had we observed the duties of charity and justice more than we have, we should have suffered less than we have. Had we been more devout, we should have been more just and more charitable.

“Those who have suffered and those who have escaped the pestilence of this year will need no exhortations to acts of individual devotion and thanksgiving. But the suffering assumed the form of a national suffering; the deliverance has been a national deliverance. The thanksgiving should be national also.”

If one had uttered all these things from the pulpit, persons would have taken them as mere commonplace observations. Now, however, we read these words from a newspaper, as an exponent of a deep-rooted public sentiment; and we must hear it, not as the ordinary commonplaces of theology, but as the solemn conviction of those who are not generally supposed to pay such deference to the Bible as one could wish.

“The form and mode of it we do not undertake to prescribe. But we are confident that the people of this land will feel it their duty to utter a solemn and public expression of their thanks to Him who has heard their prayer in due season ; and that, moreover, they will not forget that the mere expression of thanks, solemnized by whatever ceremonial it may be, will, in a season like this, be but a poor and unworthy homage at the throne of Infinite Justice. There is a sacrifice which should be performed. The graves of our cities have been crowded with the victims of greedy speculation, careless legislation, and frigid selfishness. They who have perished have for the most part perished in fetid alleys, noisome and pestiferous houses, vile and infectious cellars, the structures or properties which were owned by selfish covetousness, and erected by selfish indifference.”

When I said this, it was thought by far too strong. Now that a newspaper says it, that knows much better of these things, it is admitted to be true. The writer continues :—

“Let us take warning from our past stupidity or neglect, and not mock a religious solemnity by persisting in cruelty and apathy. While we allow the houses of the poor to be without air, light, or water, while we taint the breath of the living with the exhalations of the dead, and while we squabble in the midst of a destroying pest about the rights of vestries and commissions, our fast will be but an impious hypocrisy, and our prayers a hideous mummery.”

Then this splendid article, so truly Christian, and so magnificent in its conception and eloquence, concludes with words that I rejoice to see in a newspaper, and for which we should be unspeakably grateful :—

“Is it such a fast as I have chosen ? A day for a man to afflict his soul ? To bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him ? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord ? Is

not this the fast that I have chosen?—To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free; and that ye break every yoke?" "

This is so much like what most ministers have said, that it seems as if there were a universal feeling originating in all minds the very same ideas, and that the press, like the pulpit, has grown prophetic. And of what does this give evidence? That all men are under a deep and solemn feeling that the judgment has been so far sanctified. I trust it will be sanctified yet more; and that while there will be the expression of a nation's gratitude, there will be at the same time the fast that God has chosen—the undoing the heavy burdens. For while one deplores that there should be any in distress, while the judgment is upon us, one will deplore yet more deeply that there should be any want of gratitude, of adoring gratitude, when the judgment passes away. I far more dread lest, after deliverance, we should bring forth no fragrant fruits of gratitude, than that during the judgment we should not pray to God for deliverance. I trust that the expression of public feeling and public sentiment which I have read will not be like the morning cloud and the early dew, but that it will last for many days to come. If these things do take place, I have great hopes for our country still. Every thing that I have seen about this judgment leads one to bless God, and to be thankful; while we lament the gaps it has made, we thank him for the moral impression it has left behind.

The result of this storm was, that the disciples asked, "What manner of man is this, that the winds and the sea obey him?" The result of this epidemic will be, that the people will think, "What God is this, whose finger appeared in the judgment, whose power and goodness have also, as acknowledged in the vehicles of public information, appeared in the repression of it?" Let us bless God for his

mercies ; let us bless him for his judgments ; let us praise him for the storm ; let us praise him for the calm ; let us see him in all things ; let us see him teaching the minister in his pulpit, and whispering to the newspaper editor in his room ; let us hear him in all ; let us recognise him in all ; and let us feel, as we never felt before, that religion—true, vital religion, is the only thing worth living for, as it is the only thing in which we can happily die.\*

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\* These remarks were made in the autumn of 1849, during the epidemic, the subduing, and sanctifying, and suggestive effects of which are now, alas, neither so deep nor so general as we once ventured to hope.

## LECTURE XI.

## BETHESDA AND ITS BLESSINGS.

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.—JOHN v. 1-18.

AT what feast of the Jews this special miracle was wrought it is difficult to say; and it is not of very material moment that we should be able to determine. The

feast is called "a feast of the Jews," that is, it was peculiar to the Jews. The moment, however, that Jesus touched it by his presence, that moment it was gone; for he was the end of all types; he was the substance of all shadows: and just as the shades of night depart when the sun rises above the horizon, so the feasts and fasts and institutions of the Jews passed away the moment that the Sun of righteousness shone upon them.

Bethesda, literally translated, means the house of mercy. The place is still traditionally pointed out; and in most books upon Palestine, a certain pool or deep well is alluded to as the pool of Bethesda; but Robinson, an American writer, in his Biblical Researches, has shown, and it seems to me conclusively, that it is not the same; and that we do not know where it was. Nor does it much matter. The local is the circumstantial and the transient; the moral and the spiritual lessons of Bethesda endure now and for ever.

The pool, it seems, was either miraculously impregnated with medicinal virtue after an angel had stirred it, or it was permanently endued with that virtue, so that every one that stepped into it after it had been stirred by the angel, was healed of whatever disease he had. It is perhaps a distinction without a difference whether it was permanently medicinal, or made temporarily and specially so; for the high and true view of nature is his, who sees in nature One above it, and beyond it, and superior to it. We speak of causes and effects; we say that such a medicinal virtue is the cause of such a cure; we say that such a substance is the cause of such an effect; whereas when we have so spoken, we have not discovered causes, but only, to use the language of philosophers, sequences of phenomena, when we parade what are called secondary causes; and in each sequence is developed the power, the

presence, and the energy of Deity. A cause may be no more related to what is called its effect than one link in a chain may be the cause of the link that succeeds it: the one follows the other, but the one is not necessarily the cause of the other. And they are the true Christians and the right philosophers, who are not satisfied with tracing link after link, the one as depending on the other, till they find the whole chain fastened by its staple to the throne of God; and see God's energy and power transmitted along every link, and explain all effects by the fact that God is, and works, in them all.

It appears that at this pool, whether its virtues were permanently healing or only temporarily so, there were multitudes of the halt, the lame, and the impotent. It reminds one of our modern watering-places, as they are called. What are Cheltenham, Harrowgate, Leamington, but modern Bethesdas? What are the multitudes in the inns that are there but crowds of impotent folk, and blind, and maimed, and sick, waiting for the health which they have lost? And what is the medicinal virtue in these wells? The inspiration, the gift of the goodness of God—as much so, as truly so, as if an angel had left the skies, descended into each, and had given them all their healing virtues.

In this crowd that surrounded the pool of Bethesda, and in the crowds that surround modern Bethesdas, if such I may venture to call them, we have a suggestive fact, which will not be forgotten at the judgment-day. Men who have lost the health of the body that is day by day approximating to the dust, will go to the ends of the earth, if peradventure they may obtain its recovery; but persons who know they have lost the health of their soul, and thereby the hopes of glory, are found few and far between, if we take the nation as a whole, crowding those true and

lasting Bethesdas, the sanctuaries of God and the houses of prayer, into which not a created angel, but the Angel of the everlasting covenant, stately descends, to heal the broken spirit, and bind up the bleeding heart; to give beauty for ashes, and the opening of the eyes to them that are blind. The cause of this contrast may lie in this very true, but very painful fact, that if we have bodily disease we are conscious of it, and in proportion to the danger or the poignancy of our complaint is the speed and the sacrifice which we make in order to get a recovery; but it happens in soul diseases that that man's spiritual state is the most dangerous of all whose insensibility is the greatest of all: so that no man is so far gone in spiritual disease, as he who has the least consciousness that he is so, or who congratulates himself with the frequent remark, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and healthy, and have need of nothing." Hence it happens that man needs not to be awakened to a sense of the danger of a bodily disease, but in every case man needs to be awakened to a sense of his spiritual disease. There went to Bethesda men who felt their disease, and wished to get it healed; we come to the house of God, not merely feeling our disease, but seeking to feel it, and after feeling it, to pray that it may be healed.

One invalid appeared at this place who had been labouring under his disease thirty-eight years—not who had been there thirty-eight years, as some have construed it. This invalid was despised or jostled aside by the crowds. It is a strange fact, that a certain amount of misfortune does make men sympathize with each other; but when it becomes rapid, terrible, and universal, it creates an intense selfishness in all, so that each is ready to tread down his brother in order to find a rescue and deliverance for himself. This poor man had been so treated; the greatest

sufferer had fared the worst at man's hands. On him, however, Jesus cast his eye. The deepest affliction upon earth has ever the readiest response in heaven; that man who has few to sympathize with him here, has the Lord of glory most assuredly to sympathize with him there. Jesus cast the eye of his pity, not upon the selfish crowd who had few ailments, which their strength enabled them the more readily to use the means of removing, but first on the greatest sufferer, and to that sufferer he showed the greatest mercy. May it not be still that the greatest sinner shall find acceptance with Christ, that he who had pity on the greatest sufferer, will not put from him the greatest criminal that seeks from him that forgiveness which man cannot give, and would not if he could, but which God rejoices to bestow upon all that ask him?

Our Lord, then, casting his eye upon the sufferer, asked him the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" This seems a superfluous question. Why, there could be no doubt that the poor man would be made whole, for he had come on purpose, and had waited many a weary day to be so. And yet Christ never spoke a superfluous word, nor did a superfluous deed. There was a reason in all he said, and a necessity for all he did. And no doubt, the question that he put here was meant to quicken hopes that were dead in the poor sufferer's bosom; to revive withered feelings, affections, and desires; and to create in the desponding man's soul a presentiment of approaching cure, and cast over it the first rays of that sunshine into which Christ was soon to introduce him.

The sick man, roused by this question—and nothing so delights and revives a sufferer as a word of unexpected sympathy—instantly answered, "I have no man near me to put me into the pool, but when I am going another steppeth down before me." As if he had said, "Most

gladly would I be cured; I have been looking for it, and waiting for it; but I have the misfortune to be so thoroughly impotent that I am not able to reach the pool, and others, abler and stronger, with greater patronage or with greater aid, rush in first, and are healed." The man felt that there was no healing outside Bethesda, and that if he could not be lifted into it, he could not be healed; just as many persons think there is no virtue extrinsic to the ordinance. Christ works ordinarily by means of ordinances, but the Lord of the ordinance can work above it, without it, and beyond it. His grace is sovereign, and it descends often where it is the least expected, always where it is not deserved. Let us honour him by drawing near to him in the use of his ordinances; but let us honour him still more, when these ordinances are inaccessible, by feeling perfectly satisfied that he can work without them, above them, and beyond them.

Now if Christ had been mere man, he would have lifted the impotent person from the spot he had so long and hopelessly held, and would have placed him in the pool of Bethesda; but he did not do so. He left Bethesda to those who worshipped it as the whole spring of their recovery, and cured the impotent man by that word which was more healing than all Bethesda's waters: "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." It is well that Christ is thus sovereign; it is glorious to him, and it is also good for us. I believe that were there a specific curative power in every medicine for specific diseases, the moment that that medicine was applied, and produced its effect, one result would invariably occur—men would worship the drug as their god; the pharmacopœia would supersede the Bible; the chemist's shop would be more sacred than the Christian temple; and the physician would be another *Æsculapius*, worshipped under another name by modern idolaters. But

God interposes, and shows us, as he has shown us that there are diseases beside which the physician's skill is paralyzed, medicinal virtues are utterly worthless, and where even the atheist's lips must give utterance to the Christian's homage, "This is the finger of God." By thus teaching us that the virtue that heals is not in the drug, but in him that made it, he leads us from resting on and worshipping the things that are seen, to look up, and repose our souls, and worship the invisible God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

Christ, then, instantly addressed the man: "Arise, take up thy bed, walk." I need scarcely explain that the bed was a sort of couch on which the man lay, and which could be folded like a tent, and carried away by him. If this man, when Christ said to him, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk," had been a modern theologian, he would first have introduced the question, that man had no strength of his own, and that unless he would give him strength it was absurd to attempt to obey the order that Christ had issued. Such reasoning is always perilous, very often mistaken. The man however reasoned none, but instantly obeyed the bidding of his Lord; and the moment he made the effort, that moment divine strength enabled him to succeed. Christ says to you and me, "Pray, repent, live." You are not to pause, and say, "I cannot obey thy command till thou givest me divine power;" but you are to do it, and the very disposition that prompts you to do it is the vehicle that carries to your heart new life, and to your limbs new strength, and to the whole man a healthy, a vigorous, and a Christian tone. The grand secret of Christianity is, instant obedience to the commands of God. When he commands a duty, he always gives strength to do it; when he sends a soldier to warfare, he never does so at his own

charge; and as our day is, we shall always find our strength to be.

The Jews, when they saw this cure, instantly objected to the man on this ground—that he was carrying his couch upon the sabbath-day, urging that it was not lawful to do so. It was not zeal for the sabbath that animated them, but hatred to him who had wrought the miracle. These Jews, as we have noticed, (and when John speaks of the Jews he always means the elders and principal personages among them,) were watching to discover reasons for crucifying the Lord of glory. Whatever he did, however beautiful, beneficent, and good, was tortured and construed by their wicked ingenuity into a reason for exciting popular feeling against the Redeemer. Like the tarantula spider, which sucks poison from the sweetest roses, these Jews, with malignant hearts, drew venomous antipathy to Jesus from that which was in truth the highest reason for accepting, adoring, and worshipping him.

The man's answer to the Jews who thus cavilled at him was truly admirable. It was the very essence of that rarest sense—common sense: “The man, I know not who he was, that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.” He argued: “The love, the pity, the power that healed me surely would not have bade me do that which is in itself sinful, or to violate the sanctity of the sabbath-day.” As if he had said, “The power that has been put forth is to me evidence that it was the Lord of the sabbath that raised me from my weakness, and restored me to life. Such a Physician (he argued) is worthy of being regarded by me as a legislator; he that can give such prescriptions I am authorized in regarding as competent to give precepts that I am to obey; I regard him, therefore, that healed me of my disease, as my master, whose behests and commandments are to be implicitly re-

ceived by me." Is not this the feeling in every rightly constituted Christian mind? He who has pardoned our sins is he whose precepts we shall delight to obey; he whose cross has been to us our glory and our deliverance, is welcome to give us that yoke which is easy, and that burden which is light. That man who has the deepest and most grateful sense of Christ as his sin-forgiver, will ever feel the deepest obligation to Christ as his legislator, his master, and his Lord; and he has no right sense of Christianity or of its Author, who imagines that his deliverance from the condemnation of sin is excuse from his duty to obey all the prescriptions of his Lord, or a warrant to cease to let his light so shine before men that they, seeing his good works, might glorify his Father which is in heaven.

We gather from the context that the poor man went immediately to the temple. How beautiful is this trait in his character! He sees Divinity in his cure; he recognises the Lord of the temple in the restoration he has experienced; and instinctively, after reaping so gracious a blessing, he goes to that holy place, that there he may openly, before the world, render praise and thanksgiving to him who had compassion on him, and delivered him. Do you do so, my dear reader, when you are healed and raised from the bed of sickness? When you thank the physician who was the instrument, do you not often forget to thank God who gave to the physician all his skill, and communicated to the medicine all its virtue? Let us never forget, that our being raised from a sick-bed is a reason for our going to the temple, and presenting in the temple, in the midst of the great congregation, praise and thanksgiving to him who blessed the means, and without whose blessing all the medicine that could have been prescribed would only have been as dust, worthless and without virtue.

And when the poor man went to the temple, was he dis-

appointed in finding him who was justly called the Lord of the temple? No, for we read that Jesus finds him there. Never did adoring gratitude draw near to Christ to thank him, and was either repelled or unheard. Never yet did a sinner seek Christ, and miss him. Let it be known to every creature on earth, that never did man, conscious of his sin, seek by earnest prayer the forgiveness of the Saviour, and experience rejection, or lose an answer to his prayer. He himself has committed his word to the truth of this: "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened." "He never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain."

Mark the address of our Lord to the man whom he had cured: "Go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." Jesus did here what we cannot copy, and which we ought not to attempt to copy; he traced the connection between the sufferings of thirty-eight years and some specific sin which clung to that man's character; he saw at one glance unrolled before his eye all the biography of the man, and he beheld at one point in that biography eight and thirty years long the sin which had been the prolific parent of all the sufferings he had endured for so long and so painful a period. But while Christ, who saw the past, the present, and the future, could thus trace the connection between the special sin and the special suffering, we, to whom the past is often perplexed enough, to whose eyes the present is partially seen, and from whom the future is sequestered by a vail that we cannot penetrate, are not warranted in pronouncing that special suffering is the result of a special sin; we are commanded to conclude, as our Saviour taught the Jews to conclude, "Think ye that those eighteen men, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, were sinners above all men? I tell you nay,"—showing that if in one instance he traced the connection, in another in-

stance he showed there was no connection—"I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." In the great majority of cases we are called upon, where we cannot see clearly, to judge with the greatest caution, always with the greatest charity; because this is not the day when "justice is laid to the line, and equity to the plumb-line," or when each individual is dealt with according to his demerits. That day is to come. This is the day of grace, when sin is forgiven: there will be its sequel, the day of judgment, when sin will be punished. But while all this is perfectly true, it is not improbable that many a man suffers in his old age for the sins of his young days. It is too true that many a one—his own conscience the faithful and infallible interpreter—endures in his later years the penalties of the sins and crimes which he committed in his earlier days; and very often too, God punishes the sinner in the same way in which the sinner sinned. Thus Jacob, the deceiver, is punished by being deceived himself; thus David, who violated the sanctities and purities of home, was punished by seeing similar sins, and feeling analogous penalties, in his own home. And many a one, if he will examine himself—while neither minister nor brother is to pronounce upon him—may see in his sufferings, as in a bright mirror, the sins that he committed either in the light that he had, or, without the light that was competent to direct him in the days of his youth. But each man is to examine himself; no man's minister or brother is to do it for him. The apostle says, "examine yourselves;" "examine your own souls." And may the Spirit of God lead you to a right judgment.

Another thought is suggested by the words of our Lord, "lest a worse thing come unto thee." A worse thing. Eight and thirty years of suffering on his bed, inability to move a limb, to enjoy the scenes and festivities of social

life—why, what worse thing than this, one might ask, could possibly happen to him? That remark of our Saviour is like the lifting of a nook of the curtain that shrouds from us the awful future penalties of sin. It shows that sin is an exceeding great evil, and that thirty-eight years of suffering was not the worst and sorest penalty that is paid for a sin committed in this life.

The man, when thus acquitted and absolved, instantly went forth to proclaim the glories of his Physician; he went and told the Jews who it was that healed him. In this he presents a noble precedent for us. He who has found a medicine that has healed his disease is sure to go and tell his brother, suffering under the same disease, of the medicine that will do him good; so the man who has found a Saviour who has forgiven his sins will be sure to run and tell every one he meets that there is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared. In other words, we are made the saints of God, that we may become the servants of men. He that receives from on high the unction of the Christian, feels instantly devolving on him the responsibilities of the servant. No man is a Christian who is not a missionary. When I use the word missionary, I use merely what expresses the duties that a teacher can discharge in a school, that a father ought to discharge in his family, and that any one may discharge by proxy, by sending missionaries to distant lands and heathen climes in order to instruct those that are in darkness. Whatever be the formula in which missionary zeal expends itself, this law remains ever in force,—that he who has been the greatest receiver will also feel bound to be the greatest giver; and having received so great a mercy as salvation from his Lord, he will not rest until all within the reach of his influence shall be made to taste of, or at least to have the offer of that mercy too.

But we read that when the poor man went and told the Jews of the great Physician, like many a poor missionary, he met with very little success. He could not help this. We have long ago learned that we are not to judge of duties by the contingent success that follows them. The success rests with God; the duty devolves upon us: ours are duties; his, and his only, are the issues. We must be no more discouraged so as to despair when we fail of success, than we must be encouraged so as to presume when we meet with success. We must still cleave to the duty, when all seems to be against us, just as we do when all seems to be with us; knowing that it is he that gives the blessing, or withholds it in his sovereignty, who has called upon us to go and do what he enjoins us.

The Jews were not benefited by what the man said; on the contrary, they continued their cavils; they shut their eyes to the eloquent lesson of the miracle, and opened them only to the supposed violation of their superstitious notions on the Jewish or Christian sabbath. Our Lord's reply was a conclusive one: "You blame me for working a miracle on the sabbath; you blame the man for doing my bidding, and carrying the couch on which he lay, like a trophy of his cure, upon the sabbath. You argue, the sabbath is the holy rest; 'Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy;' on that day there shall be no work, 'neither thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger within thy gates.' You argue truly, it is rest; but you misapprehend what the nature of that rest is. You say, that God rested on the sabbath. So he did; but you forget, that while he rested on the sabbath, he 'worketh hitherto,' and just as he worketh hitherto, 'I work.'" As if he had said, if I may expand his sentiment, "Who is it that waters the fields of corn upon the sabbath morning as upon the Saturday night? Who is it that

makes the grass to grow in sabbath sunshine as well as amid Saturday's rains? Who is it that hears the cry of the raven on Sunday morning, and feeds it? Who is it that keeps up the pulsation of every heart, from which, if God were to withdraw his finger for a moment, each heart would be still, and life would instantly depart?" The answer is, It is God. "Therefore (argues our Saviour) God works upon the sabbath just as he works upon the week-day. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work.'" There is something exquisitely beautiful in this, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work." In our hospitals, wards, and sick-rooms; in the broken limb, where the bone is gradually united; in the severed muscle, where a mediatorial substance, typical and significant of a higher mediation, is put forth that rejoins it; in the health that returns to the withered frame—we read in all these sick-beds, and in all these wards, our Father working hitherto, on Saturday and Sunday, and on all the days of the week. We have the same process taking place in our hospitals every day that took place at the pool of Bethesda; only in our hospitals, sick-rooms, and wards, God uses nurses, medicines, physicians; while in the case of the pool of Bethesda he bade them all stand aside, and healed without them. The difference was in the time of the cure, not either in the author or in the virtue requisite to the cure. In our hospitals and wards he works by Bethesda—the means; at the pool of Bethesda he worked without it, and above it; but in both cases, whether Christ heals by a word, or by a medicine; whether he heals by moist clay, or by a physician, it is all the same—the Healer working hitherto. It is he alone who healeth our diseases, and satisfieth our mouth with good things; and to him, as did the impotent man, we ought still to give the praise, the honour, and the glory.

But while thus seeing that God works upon the sabbath, let us recollect that his works are in keeping with the spirit of the sabbath—works of beneficence, of goodness, and of love. So our rest on the sabbath is not a rest from working, but only a rest from working our own works. It is like the rest in heaven: it is said, “they rest;” and yet it is said, “They rest *not* day nor night, giving praise, and glory, and honour, and blessing unto the Lamb, and to him that sitteth upon the throne for evermore.”

This reminds me of what has been long threatened in our land, but which I hope will not take place—that the post-office is to be opened, or at least partially so, upon the sabbath, and much of the stir and bustle and toil of a Saturday to be exhibited upon that day which, with all its flaws and faults, has on the whole, and in comparison with the continent, been so sacredly observed in the midst of us. I am thoroughly assured of the accuracy of the statement made by the chief-magistrate of London, at a meeting over which he presided, that if the letters that come from the country and the continent are to be carried through the post-office on the sabbath-day, there will be present three or four times the number of clerks. But what is a clerk’s life worth? Who cares whether it be twenty or thirty years, or whether he die, and is damned for ever? This is the feeling of avaricious men, who are prepared to screw out of men’s muscles, and bones, and souls, money, money, honestly if they can, but money still. But London letters, it is said, are not to be delivered on Sunday. Through letters only are to be transmitted. And what will be the effect of this? London will say: “The letters that arrive on Sunday morning are transmitted instantly to Liverpool, while our letters lie in the post-office till next day; Liverpool, therefore, will know the markets twelve hours before we do. It is

not fair that the Liverpool merchants should be better off than we; let us have our letters too." The nobleman then will say, "If the merchant has his letters, why should I not have mine?" And the tradesman will say, "If the merchants and gentry have their letters, why should I not have mine?" And in less than twelve months we shall have hundreds of clerks and hundreds of postmen employed, the post-office working, counting-houses open, the clerks at their places, and the correspondence going on as usual. Surely, after the recent national deliverance that this great nation has reaped at the hand of God, it will bring down the most awful and consuming judgments if, in its national character—and I care not who hears what I say—it shall thus nationally sin against the Lord of the sabbath, that sabbath which is the exponent of a nation's Christianity more than any other fact that I can quote or refer to. It is, incontestibly, matter of history, that wheresoever the sabbath has been hallowed, there Christianity has flourished. I do not stop to inquire whether the sabbath be the product of Christianity or Christianity be the product of the sabbath, but this I feel—that the sabbath is the index of the ebb and flow of Christianity in the midst of us. Wherever it has been concluded that there shall be no sabbaths, the result has very soon followed—no Christianity; and also, as France can testify in its sanguinary records—no God. I believe that Paris has suffered more from the exhaustion of its sabbaths than ever it did from the writings of Diderot and Voltaire; so I believe that Germany, and Vienna especially, has suffered more from the loss of its sabbaths than from all the skeptical productions of the great Frederick. In the present day, I am convinced that the last dying effort of the infidel against Christianity is to be made in this direction. The persecutor of Christians and of Christianity does not

see any prospect of being able to use successfully his ancient weapons against the gospel. Past experiments have all failed ; persecution has been felt by Satan himself to have been one of his grossest blunders. Christianity rose from the martyr's fire radiant with more terrible beauty. And the more that Christians suffered, the more Christianity spread. The inquisition is not likely to appear a production of the nineteenth century ; auto-da-fés are not at all likely to be found in the streets of London ; and the skeptic's only experience tells him that weapons of reasoning, of fact, and of history, and evidence, are weapons very perilous to his cause ; for he has failed in the use of them, and if he wield the same weapons he will signally fail again. He finds that open siege will not do, that open assault will fail ; and therefore he now attempts sapping and mining ; he will endeavour to introduce into popular preference the love of whatever is calculated to make the sabbath a day of pleasure and of pleasure-taking, of business and of money-making, a day of spectacles, and tea-gardens, and military reviews, after the example of our continental neighbours ; he sees that he can make the railway and the steamboat far more powerful weapons of assault on Christianity than any weapon taken from the inquisition or from the arsenals of history, reason, or fact which he has heretofore employed. Should this succeed, farewell to the progress of the gospel in the midst of us. It will not be Christianity that will suffer by the loss of our sabbath, but it will be our country that will suffer ; our candlestick will then indeed be removed, and other lands will have the light which we in God's mercy have received, but which, by our ingratitude, we have almost extinguished.

This mode of aggression which I have alluded to is, I feel, less justified, or rather sanctioned, at the present day

than at any other time. When I heard of the railway, and of the wonderful discoveries of steam and electricity, I thought, "Surely this will furnish stronger reasons, kindly produced in the providence of God, for hallowing the sabbath than ever before." Some time ago it took, at the greatest possible speed, to send a letter to the capital of Scotland, three days; now they can transmit a message in a few minutes, and send a letter in twelve hours. Surely, instead of making this grand discovery, given us in the goodness of God, a new reason for desecrating the sabbath, bestowed by the grace of God, it ought to be a reason rather for more heartfelt remembering the sabbath day to keep it holy.

And let us remember, that they who will most suffer temporally, I do not say spiritually, will be the poor servants, the employed, the poor man in every shape and form. Most persons well know the law of what is called political economy—that the more labour there is in the market, the less pay will there be to the labourer; when there is a surplus of labour, there must be a deficiency in the payment of the labourer; when there are few labourers, with little labour in the market, then labour will meet with a high price. Now, throwing a seventh day into the labour market will be equivalent to introducing a seventh portion more of labourers into the field; and the consequence will be, that the working man will get for his seven days' labour probably less wages than he now gets for six; but there will also be stamped upon him the brand of a slave throughout the remainder of his life. Surely that beautiful day is the poor man's glory, when the servant is free from his master; when all men may meet together, and feel the ennobling persuasion that they are the peers of God, if they should be the despised plebeians of men; that beautiful day which is the pearl of days, the queen, as it were, of

the week; that place of sunshine which seems like an island broken off from the continent of heaven, and let fall into the midst of the roar, and rush, and eddies of this world's traffic; whereon man standing, may catch a glimpse of the better land, and may hear the music of the skies; and may go forth from his sabbath-day's refreshment to his week-day's work, strong to serve his master, glorify his God, and promote the cause of that Master which is thus dearer to him than all besides. Part with your cathedrals—architects can build other and better ones; but part not with your sabbaths: part with any thing, however precious it may be, with life itself—but, as patriots, as Christians, having received your sabbaths from your fathers in all their beauty, determine that when your children shall stand beside the graves where the green sods cover you, they shall be able to say, as they recollect your memory, “If our fathers did not increase our heritage, they did not diminish it; but, having received a trust sacred from their fathers, they have handed it down to their children; they have laboured, and we have entered into their labours.”

I am convinced that so good men, as many of those are who are now in power, will not consent to the desecration of the sabbath, which would be, perhaps, the greatest calamity they could inflict upon the poor man. We have sinned as a nation already; God grant that we may not add to our national sins.

But suppose the sabbath were thrown into the crowd of the week-days, do you think all sense of our need of such a day would perish? No; the sabbath is not an arbitrary enactment, but a physical necessity, an element in our very nature and constitution. Every muscle in our body is an argument for the sabbath; it will not bear to be all the year fatigued for seven days in the week. Our very

cattle furnish an argument in favour of the sabbath. The man who wishes to get the largest and the longest work from a horse, knows quite well that he must give him a seventh portion of his time for rest, or he will fail to serve him as he would do otherwise. I care not whether the day be Saturday or Sunday, as far as the horse is concerned; I am speaking only of the physical law, that the brute creation, "the cattle within thy gates," must have rest in order most efficiently to do thy work. So shall we find it with men. The man that works seven days every week of the year in the same weary round will not live half his time. The man who can go upon the sabbath-day to the house of God, and change the current of his thoughts, feelings, desires, emotions, add to his knowledge, and vary his attention, secures a change for his mind, and so for his body, of the most precious description. In the walk, too, that he has to the sanctuary, he has at least a little exercise. And when we have shorter hours and equal pay, as I hope will be, and as every day leads me to believe will soon be, you will not need to take any portion of the sabbath for fresh air; you will have a portion of Saturday given you, in justice as well as in generosity, for the refreshment of the body, and to prepare you for the exercises of the sanctuary on the sabbath. The Greeks and Romans had their festivals; the Mohammedans have still the seventh portion of their time; and in all countries there are days on which there is a cessation of business. And why? Because man cannot stand perpetual work. Let sacredness be separated from the sabbath, and what will take place? Men must be free at intervals; they must be loosed; they cannot stand incessant drudgery. The public-house, the play-house, the various scenes of amusement, dissipation, and folly, will all be opened; the flood-gates of sin and immorality will be removed; sti-

mulants to all sorts of depravity will be presented; and this country, which is a perfect contrast, as I can testify from personal knowledge, to all the countries around us, will sink to a deeper degradation because of the pinnacle of privilege from which she has fallen. Let us, then, uphold the sacredness of the sabbath in its integrity; but while we rest from the works that are our own, let us not rest from those works which are for the glory of God and the good of our fellow-men; remembering that we, like Christ, must say, as we must feel, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work." May the Lord bless every effort to keep the sabbath, and give us a delight in it, calling it a delightful day, for Christ's sake! Amen.

## LECTURE XII.

## THE FISHERMEN.

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken.—LUKE v. 1-9.

WE find Jesus, in the opening part of the chapter from which I have selected the words for our lecture, surrounded by the people pressing on him to hear the word of the Lord; and himself going into a boat, a large fishing-boat, (here rendered ship;) and, seated upon that, instructing the people in the things of everlasting life.

It appears that while the crowd were listening to him who spake as never man spake, Peter and the rest that were with him were busy washing their nets. This was their trade; they were in their proper employment, feeling—what we need to feel and be taught—that we serve God as truly when we do the duties of our station as when we preach the gospel or carry the ark of the Lord. It is

possible to glorify God wherever his providence has placed us; and they that have right hearts will never find themselves engaged in the wrong work.

When he had left speaking to the people, it is added, he addressed Simon Peter, and said, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. But Peter objected, stating that they had already been labouring in the night season, which was the best season for catching fish; and it having failed, it was unreasonable to expect they would succeed in the daytime. But still, with that beautiful docility which grace nourished and strengthened within him, he recognised his Master's authority in his Master's presence, and said, "Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

In looking at the whole of this miracle, we witness another of those beautiful and impressive scenes which so frequently occur in the life and biography of Jesus, in which we know not which most to admire—the divine power and lofty beneficence that broke forth in his actions, or the wonderful wisdom that developed itself in the teaching that he founded upon them. We see evidence, at all events, in this of a new fact in the history of Jesus—that the sea and land were equally obedient to him—that all the fishes of the deep, the flowers of the earth, the husbandmen in the field, and the fishermen at their nets, were all uncomplainingly subject to his control, and could all be made instructive teachers to his believing and his obedient people. We see in Christ the true Land-lord and the true Sealord, the Lord of heaven and of earth, whom all things in heaven, and all things on earth, and all things under the sea perpetually obey.

From this one miracle Jesus educes the consecration of his earliest apostles, of his first followers, to be ministers of the gospel and teachers of all nations. In fact, Jesus

saw over all creation, as if on one grand and beautiful cathedral, many a holy and significant inscription; he had only to look upon them with his glorious countenance, and instantly their meaning became apparent. And if we had the anointed eye and the sanctified heart, we too, as the poet says, should hear “sermons in stones,” and read lessons of piety everywhere.

Jesus bade Simon, as I have noticed, launch out. He could have brought ten thousand fishes on the shore, and left them high and dry upon the beach, if he had pleased; but he did not do so. He commands the use of means: no means are of weight unless Christ bless them; and the least are sufficient if his blessing be with them. Try to do something for him, or connected with his cause, by the greatest means, under the greatest patronage, but in defiance of his blessing, and disaster is sure to be the consequence; but attempt the greatest things in connection with his cause, and for the glory of his name, in humble reliance on his blessing, and you will learn the lesson that has been written upon all the history of the past, and will be writ upon the earth when restored from its ruin, and on the sky when illuminated with a new and lasting glory: “It is not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Let me notice Peter’s objections. First, they were weary and exhausted; they had been fishing and toiling, spreading their nets and drawing them in, the whole night; and as they had failed in the season most fitted for fishing, it was improbable and unlikely that they should succeed in the daylight, which was not so suited for that employment. But very lovingly does Peter add, “Nevertheless”—though my own reason is against thine; though my conclusions are the opposite of thine; though I am a fisherman, and have the greater experience in my trade, and the knowledge

of the best seasons for prosecuting it, and of all the like-lihoods or unlielihoods of success that may attend it—"nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." My reason shall be laid prostrate at thy feet; my conclusions shall be dismissed; and because thou biddest me, I will do it. What a precedent for us! Peter, if he had rugged features in his character, had also under these rugged features depths of tender and beautiful emotion, lowliness and humility of heart, worthy of all imitation on our part. It is a precedent, I say, for us. Our first thing should be to take care that we have a commandment from God; the second thing is, to care little about the obstructions in our way, or the difficulties we shall meet with in obeying that command. It will simplify extremely our course throughout the whole of life, if our first inquiry shall be, "Is this according to the mind, or, still higher, is it according to the command of God?" And if it be, you are to regard mountains as plains and valleys as level, and to know that nothing shall deprive him of success who goes forth to duty in obedience to the command and in reliance on the blessing of his Lord.

The consequence of Peter's single eye, and single-hearted obedience to the word of Christ, was unprecedented success. They enclosed so many fishes that the nets began to break, and the large boats, or half ships and half boats, began to sink with the load. Many have tried to explain this. The Rationalists, who are always labouring to get rid of a miracle, have tried to explain it away; and not the Rationalists of Germany only;—do we not detect in our own bosoms, whenever we read of any thing supernatural, a desire to see if it cannot be explained in some other way? whether it cannot be reduced to a lower level? whether there be not some law that will explain the phenomenon without supposing it to be the response to the

instant touch of the Sovereign Ruler of all things? The tendency of great learning, without grace, is to explain every thing supernatural by what are called “laws,” or “second causes.” The tendency of great ignorance, without grace, is to see all sorts of forms of superstition in every thing that occurs, and to explain nothing as natural, or ordinary, or to be expected. But the tendency of the highest learning and the least learning, inspired by the grace of God, is to recognise God’s finger where God says it is, and to be satisfied in so doing. The explanation given by some of the expounders of Scripture in Germany is, Jesus happened at the time to pass a shoal of fish, and he saw them as they passed, and, just at the moment when success was certain, he made them launch out the net. This is man’s commentary upon God’s word. But is it likely that Jesus—supposing him to be what they say he was, a mere human teacher, in the presence of Peter, who was, as they will admit, a thoroughly experienced and practical fisherman—a peasant, unaccustomed to fishing, should have been able to detect the fish at a distance much sooner and easier than the fishermen, who had been brought up at that trade all their life long? I have myself stood upon a bridge of the Dee, near the stream by which the days of my boyhood were spent, and have seen a fisherman watching for salmon as they came up the stream; and while his experienced eye could see the fish many hundred yards distant, I could not see it even when it was passing through the arches of the bridge on which I stood. His eye had a tact, from trained habits, that mine had not. So seamen can detect a sail at sea when landsmen can see nothing but fog. This explanation of the Rationalists, therefore, is contradictory and suicidal. The presumption is, that Peter would have seen the shoal, and, anxious to make up for the disappointments of the night, would have been the

first to launch out and catch the fish at the proper time; rather than that Jesus, unacquainted with the trade, and unaccustomed to its observations, should have first seen the fish and suggested pursuit. Surely it is far more simple, and accordant with right reason, and with a proper and simple-minded acceptance of God's word, to see in this the finger of God; to recognise upon the lake of Gennesareth him to whom belongs the Psalm, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. \* \* \* All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas"—all these things are put under his feet. At that lake of Gennesareth, then, was present the Lord and Sovereign of the heavens, the earth, and the sea; and he had only to speak, or signify his simple volition, and all things would deeply feel the presence of their Lord, and instantly obey.

Let us notice here another interesting feature—namely, our Lord availing himself of the previous trade and habits of his followers, and consecrating these trades and habits to a new and glorious mission. In fact, this feature pervades the whole of God's word. It is stated in the Old Testament Scripture, that David, feeding the sheep of his father Jesse, was brought to be a king, and the subjects of that kingdom were handed to him as the sheep of his fold. The magi, who were astronomers, were brought to Jesus by a star that stood in the firmament over the place where he was. The Samaritan woman, who came, as probably was her business, and as she had done for many a day and many a year, to draw water, was led by Jesus from drawing water at Jacob's well, to drink living water from the Fountain of Jacob's God. We may recollect how the Capernaites, greedy, and looking only for the

loaves and fishes, were instructed by Jesus in the true bread which cometh down from heaven, and of which if a man eat, he shall live for ever. And here you see Peter, and James, and John, who were fishermen, are taught that their trade is only the earthly pedestal on which its divine and spiritual significance shall shine and glow afar; and that out of the meanest trades and the most repulsive employments there can be extracted, by the touch and will of Jesus, a holy and a blessed mission. Perhaps there was more in this than mere accidental circumstances—if any circumstance at all can be called accidental. The trade, the profession, the business to which one has been brought up, is that whose formulas, whose modes, whose habits have become most inveterate in our minds; and when that is the case, to illustrate Divine truth by appealing to recognised habits, and felt prejudices even, and prepossessions, is the most effective way of bringing home great lessons to the mind of the most of mankind.

But I must now turn to the miracle itself. When the net was taken in full of fishes, and the boats were full too, Peter was overwhelmed, or, to use the language of the text, “he was astonished, and all that were with him;” and “he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” He felt the presence of Deity; the stupendous miracle indicated to Peter’s mind the nearness of him who is the holy, holy, holy One; and under the overwhelming impression of a present God, he gave utterance to that which was the first and deepest emotion in his heart. There are crises in the experience of men, when one is so overwhelmed by some great spectacle; or some dread fact, that all the ordinary currency of human speech disappears, all the conventionalisms of human intercourse are swept away, and that which is deepest in our hearts seems to well up from the heart’s

inner and most hidden springs, and to find expression on our lips, so as to let men see and hear what is really and truly within us. It was so in the case of Peter: he gave utterance to the deepest feeling of his heart, when he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." And so it has been in the Old Testament Scriptures, whenever God has manifested himself. When God revealed himself to Moses, the people said, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." We also recollect what Manoah said, "We shall surely die, for we have seen the Lord." In the case of Isaiah, when the Lord Jesus was revealed to him—declared to have been Christ, by Christ himself—he said, "Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts." Is there not in the language which Peter used, when he felt the presence of Jesus, the echo of the very language used by Moses, Manoah, and Isaiah, when they recognised the presence of the Lord of hosts? And is there not here an indirect—we should say in human writing *undesigned*; certainly in a Divine writing we can say *indirect*—evidence that he that gathered the fishes into the net—that sat upon the bow of the boat, and taught the people—that Peter recognised as the carpenter's son, but wonderfully gifted, and still more wonderfully graced (for Peter was not yet sure who he was)—was he who appeared in the burning bush, who spake to Moses, who was manifested to Manoah, who revealed himself amid angels and archangels to Isaiah; in short, the Lord of hosts, the King of glory—so far indirect evidence therefore of the Deity of Christ?

But in this language of Peter, so perfectly natural, and having so many precedents in previous expressions used on similar occasions, there was much that consisted of grievous misapprehension, although there was much that was true

and becoming in the circumstances in which he was placed. Nearness to God is ever humbling to man. A really wise man, a really learned man, is always, and must always be, a truly humble man. It is a law even in human learning, that the more we learn, the more we discover to be learned. When we see our horizon, and go to its margin, we find we are only in the centre of another horizon equally as large. When we climb one crag of the mountain, and think we have reached its summit, we find there is another portion as high still to be climbed. So much so is this, that the personation of the greatest acquaintance with the sky and all its glorious contents, Sir Isaac Newton, after he had swept the canopy of heaven, weighed the stars, estimated their distances, determined their density, declared at the close that so little did he see and know, and so little had he yet discovered, that he felt he was like a little child gathering pebbles and shells upon the sea-beach, while the great unsounded ocean stretched still before him. But if such be the feeling in the study of human knowledge, which has a bottom, how deep must be the feeling in the sight of that infinite holiness which we can neither fathom, conceive, nor express ! It is in the presence of God that the splendour of human wisdom dims and becomes pale ; it is in such a presence that the radiance of infinite holiness deepens all the shades of conscious sin. Never does the stain of crime appear so deep in its dye, so heinous in its demerits, as when it is seen in the light of that God who has told the wicked—the most awful statement in the Bible—that he will set their secret sins in the light of his countenance. At present, when we look at sin, it appears to us insignificant, just because the medium, through which we see it, and the organ, the inner eye, with which we look at it, are both so imperfect. But when sin shall be seen in the intense light of God, its stain will have a

heinousness so real, so deep, that we shall only wonder that Scripture did not use yet stronger language to denote it, and that we ever supposed that the language which Scripture does use was stronger than was actually required. In proportion, then, as man sees God, in the same proportion will he become humbled: Christendom shall be prostrate on the pavement, and say, probably, surely with no faint lips, "We are sinful men;" when there shall be revealed through its length and breadth the glory of him who is the holy, holy, holy One of Israel. Look at sin in the light of the law, and it is exceeding sinful; look at sin in the light of God the Legislator, and it appears still more sinful; but look at sin in the light of the countenance of Jesus, and it not only seems to be the deepest stain, but to be charged with the intensest baseness and ingratitude to our Benefactor. Nearness, then, to Deity, I have said, creates and teaches great humility in man; but it will not only teach us our sinfulness, and cause us to say, as Peter said, "I am a sinful man," but it will prompt us, if we have nothing better to guide us, to say, "Depart from me." Why? Because the holy God, revealed to the unholy creature, is a consuming fire; and when we see our sins in the light and effulgence and blaze of that consuming fire, we instantly feel that our only chance of safety is in separation from God. Most natural was the sentiment, "I am sinful," when God looked upon the sinner; equally natural was the prayer, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Yet Peter knew not what he said: departure from God is the very essence of hell; nearness to God is the very essence and central element of heaven. The incessant litany of the lost is, "Depart from us;" and the farther they depart from God, and God from them, the more dire and intolerable that misery becomes. And yet the cry was natural on the part of

Peter, "Depart from me," because he had the sense of danger, the sense of demerit, he had no clear apprehension of a Saviour, and felt therefore that safety was only in severance and distance from God.

But our blessed Lord does not take Peter at his word: he does not depart from Peter, but draws near to him. All flesh cried, before Christ came, "Depart from us;" "No God!" Its conscious sin made it deprecate the approach of the great Legislator. But God's ways are not as our ways; and therefore, instead of departing from us, as all humanity beseeched him, he came near to us. We read in an old writer of the second or third century, that such were the crimes, so flagrant the abominations of all the inhabitants of the earth, at the birth of Jesus, that a crisis had arrived so terrible that either God must crush the world he had made, or convert it, and bring it back to himself. Humanity expected judgment, and, lo! God came unexpectedly in mercy and in love. And just while Peter was saying, "Depart from me," Jesus was giving expression to the consolatory words, "Fear not." How interesting, and yet how like God! he comes over the mountains of our transgression, forgiving, cheering, comforting, and presenting himself, not as a consuming fire, but as the Asylum for the oppressed, as the Physician for the sick, as the Resurrection of the dead, as the great Saviour in whom was redemption through his blood; teaching Peter, and us all, not to deprecate his presence in the language of the lost, "Depart from me," but to court his presence in the language of the blessed, "Lord, to whom can we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Never let us forget, that when we have gone farthest from God, our safety is, not in lengthening that departure, but in returning to God. His invitation is, "Return, backsliding Israel, and I will heal you;" so

our nearest course is still to return—our only safe one is to arise and go to your Father. Never say, “Depart from us;” never breathe, “No God.” Let our breathing, our prayer, our entreaty be, “Lord Jesus, to whom can we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Our Lord, we read, taught Peter, “Henceforth thou shalt catch men;” using the trade to which Peter had been accustomed, in order to illustrate the great mission on which he was now sending him. It is remarkable, as I have been saying, that in every instance almost in the Old Testament Scripture, God lays hold of the gifts and the knowledge that each individual has, and consecrates these to the higher cause and to the nobler work to which he has called and appointed them. “Thou shalt catch men;” and you shall learn from the trade which you are now leaving as profane, many a holy, instructive, and directive lesson in that sublimer employment to which I have now called you. And when we think of Peter’s employment, catching fish, and Peter’s new—not holier, but more useful one, catching men, we see something that is contrast, and something that is similarity. Then he caught fishes—his only reward; now he shall catch immortal men, heirs of glory. Then he caught fishes only for death; now he shall catch men for life and happiness for ever. Then he caught the fishes by deceit, by deception, by overreaching, if I might apply such language to the craft of a fisherman; now he shall catch, not by guile, nor by carnal weapons, nor by deceit, but by the truth spoken freely in love.

It is very remarkable, that in looking at the various trades or employments which God has sanctified in the gospel, we find the hunter is never used or referred to as an employment casting the least light upon any employ-

ment in connection with the gospel. We read of almost every other profession of ancient times sanctified: we read of the shepherd, the astronomer, the servant, the drawer of water, all consecrated; but we read not of “Nimrod, the mighty hunter.” Hunting seems spoken of in Scripture—I speak not now of its merits or demerits—not as a beautiful, a lovely, or as a Christian employment; but fishing, which certainly would not, in itself, seem intrinsically nobler, is referred to frequently in Scripture, and made a storehouse from which illustrations are drawn of great and precious truths in teaching the gospel of Christ. It is very remarkable, too, that so much was the idea of the fish as the type of a Christian, and the fisherman as the great type of Jesus, incorporated with the feelings and habits of early Christians, that the anagram which was written upon ancient churches, which is found in some of the catacombs, and which is expressly alluded to by Augustine and Chrysostom, is *Iχθύς*, which means a fish. Christians, when they wished to speak of Christ, frequently wrote among themselves, and in the presence of the heathen, *Iχθύς*, a fish. They thought there was a sort of charm in it, somé designed harmony or coincidence. Each letter in the word is the first letter of a name of Jesus. The first, *I*, for *Ιησοῦς*; *χ*, for *χριστός*; *θ*, for *θεοῦ*; *υ*, for *υἱοῦ*; and *σ* for *σωτῆρ*: making *Ιησοῦς χριστός θεοῦ υἱοῦ σωτῆρ*, “Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour.” Hence you often find *Iχθύς* mentioned in the writings of the Fathers, struck on ancient coins, and on the walls of the catacombs; the meaning of the word, which to a heathen would simply be “a fish,” being “Jesus, who consecrated the fishermen to be fishers of men, and himself to be the great Guide and Governor of them all.” Thus the pope of Rome, who keeps up many things by contrast, and thus reminds one of the great original, calls himself “the fisher-

man;" and when he signs any document, adds, "sealed and signed with the ring of the fisherman;" meaning that he is a descendant of St. Peter, and that that employment was consecrated thus to express a great and divine relationship.

Thus Christ takes the trades to which men have been accustomed, and makes them the means of teaching them important lessons; thus he found the fishermen of Galilee on the banks of the lake of Gennesareth, and taught them, and consecrated them to be henceforth fishers of men; and he taught them, too, by that lesson, that they might toil all night, spreading the net with the greatest care, rowing the boat with the greatest energy, and yet not catch a single fish. So too the minister of the gospel may preach with the greatest power, he may reason with the most conclusive logic, and yet all shall be as the tinkling cymbal and the sounding brass unless God shall bless it. In the case of Peter, his net was cast all night, spread, and drawn in, and all was vain; but the instant that Jesus poured his blessing on the net, and his benediction on the deep, that instant he had more even than he could manage. So the minister of the gospel, the Sunday-school teacher, the tract distributor, may toil and labour with persevering and commendable efforts, in all directions, at all hours, by night and by day, and yet catch nothing; but when they begin, under a sense of their own insufficiency, to appeal to the sufficiency of God, then the morning will dawn, and the blessing will descend, and they will be made the joyful fishers of men, to the glory of God and to the salvation of souls.

We read, as the sequel of this miracle, that the disciples of Jesus, "when they had brought their ships to land, forsook all, and followed him." Rationalists have referred to this circumstance; and Strauss, especially, with a sneer

upon this “forsook all,” asks, “What right had Peter to take credit, as he does, for forsaking all? What did he forsake? He forsook nothing worth retaining; and therefore to say he forsook all is to exaggerate a very insignificant act; and for Peter to take credit for it was to take credit for a thing of very little value.” This proceeds just from ignorance. Little as it was which they forsook, you must recollect that they forsook their all. The hut which is all that a widow has, is just as precious to her, and as reluctantly resigned, as the palace which is the royal all of a queen. Worldliness is not measured by the amount it possesses, but by the tenacity with which it grasps the little or the much that it has. It is not, therefore, the property that is sinful, but it is the passion which cleaves with excessive love to that property, be it large or small. Hence the possessor of a million may be a far less covetous man than the possessor of £250 a year; the occupant of a throne may be a far less proud and ambitious man than some poor dweller in a cottage. And what we are to leave and forsake, in the providence of God, is not the property that God has given us for use, and for consecration, and for good, but those worldly desires that make the property all, and the Giver of that property to be dislodged and displaced by an inferior love and passion. It is not the world that we are to leave, but worldliness; it is not money that we are to forsake—money is a good thing, a most excellent thing—but it is avarice, or the excessive love of money, that we are to leave; it is not honour that we are to refuse, but it is ambition; it is not power that is given us in the providence of God that we are to renounce, but it is the pride which the possession of power is apt to generate. The world we are to use, as not abusing it; worldliness we are to forsake. Money we are to consecrate to the noblest end; but covetousness we are to abjure. Hence

in Jeremiah we do not read, "Let the wise man put away his wisdom, let the rich man cast away his riches, let the strong man deprive himself of his strength,"—yet those who confound the world with worldliness, and money with avarice, and wisdom with pride, should so read it,—but the prophet says, "Let not the wise man *glory* in his wisdom," which shows that he may keep his wisdom, "nor the strong man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches," which shows that we may have riches, and yet not be covetous. We learn, therefore, that we are to forsake all by forsaking it in spirit, not forsaking it mechanically and in fact: just as we renounce the world, not by leaving the world mechanically and going into convents, but by keeping the world in its place, that God may occupy the throne of our hearts alone.

When they forsook all, it is said, they followed Christ. They followed his person, which was then visible to them, and his principles, which were ever sounding from his lips. We follow his person, invisible to us, but not unknown, (for we cannot follow or love the unknown, though we may follow and love the unseen,) and we follow his principles still embodied in the Scriptures—those Scriptures which reason still of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment. And in what respects are we to follow Jesus? Time would fail me to enumerate all; let me mention one or two.

We are to follow him in self-sacrifice. True, we cannot offer our lives as a sacrifice for sin, for this he did once, and it is not to be done again; but we can surrender all that is dear, and near, and precious, when it stands in the way of acceptance of his word, or obedience to his will. Jesus went about not merely making a sacrifice for sin, but as a beautiful example, leaving us a model we are to imitate, and footprints in which we are carefully and prayerfully to tread. And if there was one trait more characteristic of

Jesus than another, it was the intense, the untiring benevolence which descended, not, as ours often does, upon those who we think will appreciate it, or thank us for it; or who are of our own party, our own country, or our own denomination; but like the rain-drops and sunbeams, on the just and on the unjust, on the evil and unthankful. One of the great blights that nip and freeze up our benevolence in its very bud, is our thinking we are not to oblige a man who will not repay us, and that we are not to relieve a poor person because that person will not appreciate our goodness or give us any thanks. Never shall we have, or feel, or show the spirit of our Master, till we believe want because it is want, and because he bids us, irrespective of what the subject of that want may think, or say, or return to us. Self-sacrificing benevolence, for benevolence' sake, was one of the great and holy characteristics of our blessed Master.

We are also to follow him in another interesting trait—the subordination which we have noticed in all these miracles, and in all the lessons he raised upon them, of what is circumstantial to what is essential. We have noticed frequently in his discourses, and inferences, and lessons, how the one is subordinated to the other. For instance, he prescribed a form of prayer on one occasion, but he practised extemporaneous prayer on most occasions; and lest there should be a dispute about the comparative excellency of the one, or the comparative defects of the other, he says, “Neither in this mountain nor in that mountain shall we worship the Father, for God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; for such the Father seeketh to worship him.” Again, in the sabbath-day we find him appearing in the synagogue worshipping with the rest; and yet doing miracles, in order to rescue it from the traditional perversions of the scribes and Pharisees. Again, with regard to fasting, he shows

how it is proper in one case, but improper in another; and that fasting, therefore, still more than the sabbath, was made for man, not man for fasting.

Another trait in the character of Jesus which we ought to follow, is his faithful and sublime indifference to the opposition of party, or of power, or of sect, in his discharge of the solemn and august mission which was committed to his hands. He tells the Pharisees that they were superstitious hypocrites, not fearing the wrath of that powerful ecclesiastical faction. On the other hand, he drives the money-changers from their temple, not fearing the revenge of the money interest, the most powerful then, as it is not the least powerful now. He defies the wrath of the crafty Herod, telling him plainly of his craft; and he stands the most kingly one, when at the tribunal of Pilate, accused as a criminal before an earthly judge.

Let us in these respects imitate him; let us care little for prospects of honour, for preferment in the church, for increase of power, for any thing that man can give; but let us fearlessly and faithfully do the duty that devolves upon us. We may be honoured, we may be popular, we may be great, we may be rich, but we must be faithful as ambassadors for God, and servants to his people.

Yet, while we mark in the conduct of Jesus this sublime indifference to all contingent persecution, we must notice also the beautiful gentleness that shines through it. Look at him on one occasion, when he took their babes from the bosoms of their ragged mothers, and laid his hands upon them, and blessed them, and told these down-trodden ones that of such was the kingdom of heaven. Watch him again sympathizing with the sisters of Bethany, weeping with them, and bringing back their lost brother to their circle; or with the widow of Nain, restoring her only son to be her comfort and her support. Look at him again in his

last dread agony, when he committed his mother—a beautiful example to us—to the charge of John; and when he addressed the daughters of Jerusalem, “Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves.”

Because he is our sacrifice, our precious sacrifice, our only trust, our only atonement, our only righteousness—we must not lose sight of him as our perfect example, our model, our precedent in every difficulty in which humanity can be placed. Whether I look at the silence, or at the speech of Jesus—at what he did, or at what he taught, or at what he suffered, or at what he was everywhere, I see a heart in which every sound of human joy and sorrow found an echo—I see one whose life throughout was a perfect model, and whose example is now left with us that we may follow in his steps. And following him as our sacrifice and our example upon earth, and our works following us as the evidence of what we have been to the world through which we have passed, it shall be written over our dead ashes, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord;” and to our glad souls it shall be said, “Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

## LECTURE XIII.

## NATURE SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS.

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.—MARK v. 1-17.

WE learn, from the close of the previous chapter, that Jesus had just shown himself the Lord of the storms, the controller of the elements by which our world is assailed; and in the commencement of this chapter he shows himself in a light still more glorious—the Lord of the inner

storms by which the human mind is deranged. In the first case, he stills the sea, and there is a calm; in the second, he casts out the demon, and he that was possessed is sitting at his feet, clothed and in his right mind. Now in opening this miracle, which I have taken as the next in succession, a great difficulty has been felt by some, and expressed by not a few, as to there being or not being any real distinction between what are called demoniacal possessions in the New Testament, and mania, or maladies of various sorts and degrees of intensity. One fact alone seems to me almost conclusive on the subject, and it is this, that the diseases to which the body is incident, and demoniac possessions with which men have been afflicted, are stated by our Lord himself as distinct and separate things. Thus he says, for instance, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, iv. 24, "And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, [that is, one class of afflicted beings; then here is another class,] and those which were possessed with devils, [there is a second class,] and those which were lunatic;" there is a third class. Now this is not mere repetition of the same idea in varied phraseology, but it is the enumeration of three distinct classes of maladies; and, in these three distinct classes, possession with demons is stated to be a separate one. I might show the very same distinction in Matt. viii. 16, and also in Mark i. 33. I will refer only to the last, namely Mark i. 33: "And all the city was gathered together at the door; and he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, [that's one class,] and cast out many devils, and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him." Here again the distinction is made broad, clear, and decided between one class of disease, lunacy, or mania, or any other, and this specific class of suffering, called demoniacal possession.

In the next place, the language of our Lord on the occasion of his casting out devils, is such as to warrant us in concluding that it was an actual, or literal, demoniacal possession. When he approached the person that was possessed with a demon he said, "Hold thy peace;" and again he said, transferring his address from the man and addressing the demon, "Come out of him, thou unclean spirit." Now such an address to a mere physical disease would be a perfect playing upon words; and if we believe that Jesus ever spoke as never man spoke, we must conclude that there was a reality in this, and that he did not merely express himself in a figurative manner. But Strauss, and some of those who see myths, because they see through a mist, in every page of the word of God, and other infidels of the same Rationalistic school in Germany, say that Jesus accommodated his language to the popular and prevailing notions of the people among whom he sojourned. Were my estimate of Jesus the same as theirs, I could perhaps conceive such accommodation at least possible; but I believe that Jesus was not only the truth-speaker, but the truth itself: he came not to make a lie the basis of his mission, but to dislodge the lie, and destroy it by the application of truth. He came to put an end to all deceptions, to all hypocrisies, to all falsehoods, and to establish supreme in each man's heart, and ultimately in the world itself, the sovereignty of pure truth and of perfect righteousness. I admit that we sometimes apply a word that means something very different in its first application, to things to which it is in some degree now inapplicable; for instance, in the present day we call persons who are deranged, *lunatics*; we speak of a lunatic asylum; we use the term lunacy. The origin of these words was this: people supposed in the first instance that the moon exercised a specific power over certain individuals, and they

became lunatic, moon-struck, or affected by the moon. We now know better, because science has taught us better, and we now apply the word *lunacy* without encouraging deception in the least degree, because it is the general and popular word for mania, or derangement of the mind. But if I were to go further—mark you now, here is the point of distinction—and try to cure a lunatic, or if a physician were to try to cure a lunatic, by saying to him, “Thou moon, come out of him,” or, “Moon, cease to influence him,” then there would be there, not the use of a mere word that has become stereotyped, but there would be the recognition of the superstitious notion that the moon did influence him, and that he was under the sovereignty and dominion of that planet. But our Lord applies this very formula and process of speech to demoniacal possessions; and this alone is evidence to me that he did not use a popular name by which to delineate a well-known, painful, but common disease, but that he spoke to demons who lodged in the human soul, and drove that soul whither they would.

Now, in looking at the demoniacs who are spoken of in the New Testament, and the Gadarene demoniac seems to have been one of the very worst cases of them all, I may notice that these demoniacs were not necessarily or in every instance the guiltiest of men, but they were in all instances the unhappiest of men. Satan entered into Judas, and he betrayed and sold his Lord. That was a totally different possession. Seven demons dwelt in Mary Magdalene; and a demon dwelt in this Gadarene demoniac; but each was a totally distinct state. Though the real demoniac may have been guilty of what opened the door and courted the inrush, as it were, of these evil spirits, yet still his case in the main was misfortune—more misfortune than it was crime. It is also remarkable in the case of the demoniacs,

that there was a groaning under the tyranny they endured. They lifted up a piercing cry continually for deliverance; and, in the case of this demoniac, there was not only this cry for deliverance, but a flinging himself at the feet of Jesus, and asking that Saviour to interpose and to deliver him. In other words, these demoniacs were evidences not merely of Satan acting on and influencing the human heart as he still does, and as he always has done, but they were evidences of what man is very anxious to deny—that Satan had, as it were, burst the bands with which we confine him; that he had found, not a moral influence upon the heart, but an actual foot-hold upon the earth; that he had already, as it were, got within his grasp one or two unhappy victims, evidences of what he would do if he only could, and teaching us by that exhibition Satan's energy and malignant efforts and daring everywhere.

Again, that it was an actual demoniac possession would be evident from this fact too, that there seemed to have been two wills in the person—the will of the victim and the will of the spirit driving him wherever he would. The best exposition of it is the counter-possession, when persons were possessed by the Holy Spirit, in the apostolical dispensation. We read that the Spirit spake by them in divers tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance; and the apostle himself says, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” There was, as it were, the will of the individual acted upon by the will of the Spirit, and in special miraculous cases the Spirit acted independent of, and even contrary to, that will.

Now, the question will be asked by many who are sceptical, and to whom this reasoning does not appear so conclusive as it does to me, “If demoniac possessions were in those days, how is it that demoniac possessions are not now?” The best way to answer many foolish questions

that very foolish men often put, is by asking them another. If you will not accept facts, because you cannot solve all the accompanying difficulties, you will have to live a life of perfect Pyrrhonism, of absolute skepticism. Will you answer me how it is that epidemics that existed once do not exist now? Will you tell me why it is that the last epidemic, the cholera, was not known in Europe, (I believe,) or in India, till 1817? Will you tell me why it came in 1832, was suspended, and then came in 1849? It will be time enough to answer why demoniac possession is not now, when you solve many other mysteries in prophecy and providence just as inscrutable as this. But may it not be in God's permissive providence that Satan shall have a manifestation in one century that is not permitted to him in another? that he shall show his malignity in one formula to-day, and exhibit that malignity in a totally distinct formula to-morrow? It may be that the Satan of the nineteenth century, the angel of light, is a more dangerous demon than the Satan of the first century, driving the demoniac, and cutting him, and impelling him whither he would.

There may, however, perhaps be another solution of the difficulty, and it is this, that just before Christ came into the world, Satan's sovereignty had reached its highest pitch; evil had attained, if I may so speak, its culminating point; there seems to have arrived (and I speak from the testimony of heathen writers, as well as from the testimony of inspired writers) about the year 1, a state of things so terrible, that, judging after man's judgment, there appeared to be but two alternatives left for God: either to crush the world and expunge it from amid the shining orbs of creation, or to come down to it, redeem it, and restore it. God's ways are not our ways; and when he might have come in wrath he came in mercy. Now, if it be true that the world was

in that terrible state, it may be that Satan had then attained his most terrible and expressive development, and that the demoniac possession, which was, as it were, the highest ground he had reached in this world, subsided, as Satan's power subsided, after the cry was heard, "It is finished," and the Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost.

I know some will start in the midst of all this another difficulty—Why does God suffer it to be so? The answer to that difficulty is, that we know little why evil was introduced, we know not why evil is continued, and we know still less of the great and ultimate objects which are triumphantly to evolve from its presence and its permission: this we know, however, that evil is not eternal, as the old Manicheans maintained; and we believe, too, that evil is not unripe good, as the present Pantheists maintain—one of the latest and absurdest notions in the world. Emerson, and some of his school, allege that evil, or sin, murder, adultery, theft, are unripe honesty, unripe goodness, unripe justice, and unripe truth; as if (strange!) a sour, poisonous fruit could, by sunshine and sunbeams, become a delicious and a nutritive one. The thing is absurd; we do not believe in either of these things; but this we do believe, that sin is in the creature, and that God is determined to expunge and utterly destroy it; but then he is determined to do so, not by an act of omnipotence, which would not be victory; but by truth, by love, by the manifestation of his own mind and will, and through the instrumentality of his own chosen and redeemed people. We know that sin will be vanquished, and Satan too; but neither will be vanquished by a stroke of omnipotence, but by the penetrating, persistent, gentle power of love in men's hearts, and the truth in men's heads.

Another reason why we may deem demoniacal possessions to have ceased, if they have ceased—and I am

supposing that they have ceased, though some doubt and question this—may be the universally admitted and actual fact, that Satan, however powerful at our Redeemer's birth, yet by our Redeemer's atonement received a blow from which he has never recovered. Our Lord himself says, "I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven," which would seem to indicate a dethronement, or a subordination which he had not before. And there remains this fact, too—whatever God does in the world, Satan always gets up something very like it, because his hope of progress is by deception. We may quote the miracles of the magicians of Egypt: Satan got up his miracles too, perhaps real miracles, at least supernatural ones. When there were true prophets, Satan had his company of prophets too. When God was manifest in the flesh, which was one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one years ago, Satan was manifest in the flesh too: he got up a mimicry of it—demoniacal possessions. We find the same fact now-a-days; for as God manifest in the flesh was the truth that seems to have struck Satan down, so the preaching of this truth strikes down Satan still. Rhennius had the idea that among many of the Indians there is something approaching to demoniac possessions. And missionaries declare that they sometimes find manifested among the heathen, the unconverted savages of the desert, a power that is all but superhuman; so that whenever the gospel is preached in heathen lands, there is always a desperate effort to crush and to extinguish it. And who knows, but that in some of our lunatic asylums (though I would not dare to say that this or that lunatic is demoniacally possessed) there may be still actual demoniac possessions? I have seen a lunatic asylum; and of all sights it is, I think, the most humiliating and terrible. I could look upon the battle-field covered with the mangled dead, but

the cells and inmates of a lunatic asylum present the most painful, humbling, and all but intolerable sight it was ever my lot to gaze upon. The body in its worst ruin is nothing to the awful wreck of that more glorious intellectual life which God gave to man. And yet these lunatics may be far nearer the kingdom of heaven than many a wiser man. They may have been Christians before they lost their responsibility; their madness may be their misfortune, not crime; chastisement, not penalty; many of these may shine like the brightness of the stars for ever, when others, who have turned the wisdom that God has spared them to unwise and guilty purposes, shall be condemned to eternal wo.

Thus, then, we have stated a few reasons for supposing that demoniac possession may have ceased, and some reasons for believing it may still continue. My opinion of the Church of Rome is, that it is one colossal demoniac possession. I know that certain men look on it merely as a corrupt church, a church a little astray. I am not denying that there are good men in that church in spite of it; but this I do say, and persist in, that the system seems to me one huge demoniacal possession, where Satan has his license and his miracles. I believe that many of the miracles wrought by priests in the Middle Ages were supernatural, or infranatural rather. Whenever I hear a priest say, "We have wrought miracles," I admit it. I say, "Certainly you have. I do not doubt it. If you had not done them, you would have lost one of the brands by which your church is distinguished." I believe that that system of apostasy is just the counterpart to the true church; and no man can fail to notice, throughout the Book of Revelation, how the two great opposing bodies are, the Lamb, and the wife of the Lamb, and they that are his,

and the “beast” of the apostasy, and they that belong to him and are his.

But I pass on to notice the special and individual portrait that is sketched in the chapter on which I am now lecturing. He was one specimen of demoniacal possession — the most awful perhaps that we can well imagine. It appears that he dwelt in the tombs. This seems all mystery to us, because, professing to have advanced in civilization, and having our graves six feet in the earth, and in the midst of our very houses, in order to keep up incessant typhus and cholera among us, we fancy immediately, when we read of a man among the tombs, that it must be among those green hillocks that we see in our neighbourhood, some of which so many parochial authorities are resolved to retain as enclosures, because, I presume, they must enjoy them. But in these countries it was not so. The Jews had no such things as intramural interments. There were no such thing suffered in a single city, as the dead piled up among the living: and bad as were the Athenians, Romans, and Greeks, they knew of no such habit. And yet we say, This is the nineteenth century, and we have great light. We ought to learn that, as long as such things are suffered, we shall have plenty of pestilence and disease to testify against us. But in the countries of the East, and in Judea, it was altogether different. They had their graves far distant from the city; so that when the demoniac is represented as running among the graves, he appears to be among the mountains, and for the reason that they had for burial-places immense cavities cut into the rock, deep recesses in which the dead were buried, and into some of which such a person as the demoniac of Gadara might enter. Burckhardt, a recent traveller, states, that near Gadara, at the present day, there are vast tombs of gigantic capacity, which have evidently been

used for the burial of the dead; and this poor creature, like a spirit cut off from his kind, crept about these tombs, and felt his only congenial habitation to be, as it were, among the dead, and there, in the language of the passage I have read, cut and wounded himself, and howled among the mountains. It is very remarkable to notice the contrast in his character. It seems that the evil spirit held, and drove, and impelled him where he would not. You can see in the man a human consciousness, indicating unextinguished human sensibilities, which led him to the feet of Jesus; and you can see, overpowering this human will, this personal consciousness, some terrible demoniac power, crying out from his bosom to Jesus, "I adjure thee by the living God that thou let us alone." You can see, as it were, two natures in the man, the human in its agony, groaning to be delivered, and the fiendish in its depravity, imploring to be let alone.

And there is something, too, remarkable in this, that the evil spirit, as it is recorded in another Gospel, says, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" "Before the time"—how remarkable is that expression! The very demons believed the prophecy that had sounded in their hearing for four thousand years; they knew that they were kept in chains till the judgment of the great day; they believed that the earth would be disentangled and disinfected of their horrible and malignant presence; and the very prayer that these demons uttered implied that their greatest torment was being in their own place. "Art thou come here to torment us?" How torment them? By casting them out of this man? That is not torment. It was sending them to their own place. Satan's only joy is his success in seducing and destroying others, and the greatest torment that Satan feels is where he meets with the greatest resistance. The only fresh air he

breathes, the only sweet scenes he witnesses, are when he has a foothold on earth and a prospect of getting a broader, wider, and firmer one; and never does he feel his torment reach its greatest acme until he is sent to his own place, and driven from among men. What a terrible idea of torment this gives! That one should deprecate his home as his punishment is a very awful feature; and that the demons should deprecate their own place as being the site, the scene, and the source of their intensest agony, gives a picture of what they are, and where their fall has plunged them, very dark and terrible indeed.

It appears that when Jesus drew near to the man, he was not delivered of the demons instantly, but underwent a tremendous paroxysm of suffering and distress. Why it was so, we know not. Whether it was to make the thing more apparent, we know not. Jesus asks the poor demoniac his name. There is something beautiful in this. When we approach an excited man with some quiet, gentle word, or approach a man walking in a dream and just breathe to him his name, the spell is broken, and he listens, and is restored to his mind. Our Lord seems, in the exercise of that sublime philosophy which he alone knew, just to have breathed the man's name—simply to have asked the man his name. The poor man's answer would have been, A, or B, or C, John, or Peter, or whatever it was; but the evil spirits repress the answer of the man, and they shout, as it were, in the earnestness of triumph, "We are legion." A legion in the Roman army consisted of six thousand persons, three thousand horse and three thousand foot. And why do they say so to Jesus? It was because they wished to intimidate him, as though they had said, "Don't meddle with us: if you do we are more than a match for you. You will find that we are not one that

you can easily crush, but a mighty multitude, that will rush upon you and destroy you also."

We read that the evil spirits prayed that, if let loose, (this is related in the parallel passage in Luke viii. 31,) they might not be driven out into the deep. It is, and ought to be translated, "into the abyss." And then they besought him to let them go into a herd of swine. Now there has been a great deal of difficulty expressed, and a great deal of scoffing uttered about this very thing. The speaking of the ass of Balaam in the Old Testament, and the rushing into the sea of the demonically possessed swine in the New Testament, have been standing gibes for silly infidels in all ages and in all countries. But just let us study it, and we shall see, that if skeptics would think more and read more, and be less partial, they would see justice, truth, harmony, beauty, where now they can see nothing.

In the first place, it seems to us a mystery that Christ should answer the prayer of the demons at all. Sometimes he does not answer his own people; and to such it will appear a mystery that he should answer the demons prayer. But the answering of that prayer was in this case, as the granting of prayer has been in other cases, the greatest possible calamity. I sometimes think, God shows greater love to us in refusing to answer our prayers—many prayers that we offer—than in giving us the answers that we demand.

Jesus gave them permission. He did not command the demons to go into the herd of swine, but permitted them to do so. However, I do not lay stress upon that. If there is any other way of disposing of them, why let the demons take possession of the swine, and why let the swine be thus destroyed? First, if in any way the destruction of the brute can contribute to the good, or the support, or

the instruction, or the progress of man, it was only the exemplification of a fact that occurs every day. If the Lord, that made all things and made these swine, could do man good, morally, physically, or otherwise, by their destruction, he only did then and in that act what is done every day when the innocent lamb, the unoffending bird, the patient ox, are slaughtered for man's nutriment. But, in the second place, such a transition to the swine may have been to give the poor demoniac a more clear and conclusive evidence that he was delivered from the demon. We have a parallel case to this in the history of the Israelites. When they crossed the Red Sea they would not believe that they were delivered from their pursuers, until they were permitted to see the dead bodies of their enemies high and dry upon the beach. And so here it may have been in condescending love to him who had been a most unequalled sufferer, that the Lord Jesus permitted him to see the utter destruction of the swine, that he might be satisfied that he was thus cured, and might fear no more.

But some will say, "Was it not a very great loss to the owners of these swine to destroy two thousand of them, who apparently had done our Lord or done the demoniac no harm at all?" I answer, is it a loss very unusual or very strange? Was it not an unjust thing in God to send the potato disease and create famine in Ireland? And was it not a very unjust thing to send murrain among the sheep and oxen the other year, and destroy whole flocks and herds? Yet if you did not complain of God in his providence doing this, why do you complain of God, as recorded in the page of the gospel, doing on a less scale, and with less disastrous effects, one and the very same thing? But there was more than this. The cure of the demoniac was made only the more remarkable because it was associated with the chastisement and punishment of

them that deserved it. These swine were kept by Jews,—Jewish proprietors,—and these Jewish proprietors employed the Gadarenes to do what they themselves held to be unlawful, as it is said of Jews still, that they will feed their servants on food that they would not eat themselves, and command them to do things on their sabbath, and, because they do not put a finger of their own to them, think that they escape the sin of profaning what they call the true sabbath. Well, these Jewish proprietors employed these Gadarenes to keep their swine. The Gadarene swineherds were paid their wages, and the Jewish proprietors pocketed the results. It was against the law of Moses to keep such swine, and these men that thus kept them knowingly sinned and offended against the express injunctions of that law which they had promised strictly and rigidly to obey ; and thus they were punished for their conduct in neglecting plain duties in order to indulge in gross avarice. But, alas, there is much of the avaricious Jew still in many a London landlord. They grieve more that the murrain should cut off their sheep, their swine, and their cattle, than that cholera and typhus fever, conducted by the filthy channels which their avarice has left, should cut off whole families and depopulate whole neighbourhoods. And the reason is this :—when the pestilence has emptied their lodgings, their lodgings will let again ; but when the disease has cut off their swine, they cannot recall the swine to life again. It is the loss they sustain, and not the humanity they feel, that thus actuates and guides them.

The rush of the swine into the sea, however, teaches us another lesson, and it is perhaps a lesson of some importance. We always suppose that Satan and the evil spirits have a foothold only in rational beings ; but it is not impossible, nor improbable, that Satan and satanic influences

may be in the brute creation also. My first reason is what the apostle advances when he says, that "the whole creation [I believe that to be the brute creation and the material universe] groans and travails in pain even until now, waiting to be delivered." Why groan? Because Satan bestrides them. Why in pain, and crying for deliverance? Because it is demoniacally possessed. Whether God permits, commands, or restrains the tempest, or the demon may ride the winds or lash the waves, it may do very well for a material philosophy to dispute; but they that know that Satan's outer world and our inner world are at certain parts interlaced and intermingled, will not be the first to dispute. But do we not now, to take a parallel case—and a German writer advances this very fact—find animals receptive of human influence? Let the rider sit firm upon his horse, and the animal will feel the influence, and be full of heroism, he will rear himself and sympathize with him, he will brave every danger and prance heroically. But let the rider, on the other hand, be timid, fearful, and paralyzed, and the very horse himself seems to lose his courage and his mettle, and to sympathize with his rider in his fears. Have you not noticed that the dog will almost echo your lamentations, and that, when your face is bright with smiles, the poor brute will almost reflect them? What is this, but proving that the brute creation is receptive of human influence? And why may we not conclude that the brute creation may be receptive of the demoniac influence too? Thus, as the apostle says in Romans viii., creation, when it groans, may do so because it is conscious of an intrusive element from beneath—a demoniacal possession that influences, guides, and controls it.

Another fact we may notice here. It is, how completely the wicked often outwit themselves! Satan has blundered

often in his dealings during the last eighteen hundred years; and this shows that, malignant as he is, he is not infallible. These demons thought they had got a grand concession when they prayed that they might be allowed to enter into the swine; but that concession was only precipitating them more speedily into that abyss which they deprecated as the place of their torment.

We read that the Gadarenes also presented a petition to Christ; and what is that petition? Mysterious fact! strange, startling, painful fact! That men that saw such a triumphant thing as the demoniac healed, clothed, and in his right mind, should call upon and beseech the Divine messenger that made him so, to leave their coasts just as quickly as he could—how inexcusably criminal must they have been! And yet, even in this land, it is possible for us to imitate their example. Do we not act in some such way, or rather, may we not act in some such way, when we say, “See what Christianity has done; how it has transfigured with a celestial glory every land it has touched, indicating by the trail of light and beauty and happiness in its path, that it is the ambassadress of God, and the benefactress of the earth;” and yet—what I trust we never shall be permitted to do—look into the face of Christianity, that fair face, the sabbath, which shines so brightly on the benighted, which radiates mercy upon the down-trodden, and gives joy to the sorrowful, and say to it, “Depart from our coasts!” Our merchants would not be enriched by the loss of the sabbath; our land would not be elevated by its surrender. It is that beautiful respite which restores us, so that the Christian touches heaven every sabbath, as Antæus of old touched the earth, and gets new strength and vigour for the duties and sacrifices of the week.

And let me say, the demoniac wandering amid the

tombs, cutting himself, howling amid the mountains, torn by demons, is only the meet-type of that sabbathless land across the Channel, which is ever restless, ever complaining, ever howling some new shout ; but, unlike the demoniac, never fleeing to Jesus for deliverance and for safety. Contrast with it this land of ours, with all its faults, with all its defects, its sins, and its deficiencies ; a land overshadowing with its wings almost the four quarters of the globe ; a land that spreads its sail to every breeze, and drops its anchor on every strand ; the home of exiles, the asylum of the persecuted, where even the Hungarian Bem might come and find a shelter, without the necessity of changing his faith and taking ours ; where Turk, Mohammedan, Mussulman, Hungarian, and Russian, may come and find peace ; a land whose acres are dotted with temples as with stars, and from whose homes and hearths there ascends everywhere increasingly the song of praise ; and where all men, blessed be God, may have, and I hope ever will have while it lasts, a sabbath rest and a sabbath repose. I ask, my dear friends, if you find not in the demoniac, clothed, restored, and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus, the very type of our land, enjoying its sabbaths, thus blessed, thus mighty. And what has made it so ? Who has made us to differ ? Only the Son of God, through his Bible, which is his will, through his sabbath, which is his witness, through the gospel, which is his voice. Perish all England's swine together, but let her sabbaths still shine. Let all depart from our coasts, but, in the language of the disciples going to Emmaus, "Blessed Master, abide with us even unto the end." Amen.

## LECTURE XIV.

## NATURE SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS.

And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done for thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great thing Jesus had done unto him.—LUKE viii, 26-39.

THE passage which is parallel to this, and which contains in substance the same sentiment, in words little different, is in Mark v., where we read, “And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with a devil, and had the

legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And when Jesus was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis [that is, in the city] how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel."

In my last lecture I described at length the historical portion of the very remarkable, and, in some respects, difficult miracle, the record of which I have now read. I do not here recapitulate, but proceed to notice two grand features in the close of the parable: first, the position in which the man was found; and, secondly, the duty which our Lord devolved upon him.

The position in which he was found, we are told, was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. How interesting is this spectacle! how appropriate the seat selected by the recovered demoniac! It was the place of nearness to Jesus, and intimate communion with him. From that blessed source he had received a great and unspeakable blessing, and to that Lord his love and gratitude taught him to cling and cleave closer and closer. Perhaps he selected this place also as the site of safety. The man feared that there might be a return of the evil spirits that had departed from him, and therefore he sat near to him who alone was mighty to exorcise them, and in whose presence alone he thought he would be able to prevent their ultimate return. Or perhaps his sitting at the feet of Jesus may denote that, having been delivered from the grievous curse under which he groaned, he may have now been seeking that instruction which was requisite to guide and to direct him. I need not say that sitting at the feet of one

is a Scripture phrase for becoming a pupil or scholar to one. Thus, we read that God called Abraham to his feet—that is, placed Abraham in the position and relation of a pupil to be instructed by God, the great Teacher of his family. Thus, we read that Saul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel—that is, was taught by him. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus—that is, listened to him, and learned from his lips new lessons of love, responsibility, and duty. Thus the recovered Gadarene sat at the feet of Jesus, seeking, no doubt, to be instructed by him. And so far he is a precedent for us. If we have felt the power of Christ as our Deliverer from condemnation, our very first duty is to draw near to him and ask him to be our Teacher also. We need not only emancipation from the curse of sin by his most precious blood, but also direction, teaching, instruction, line upon line, from his holy and sacred lips. And if we go to him, he will teach us to count all but loss for the excellency of him who has saved us with a high hand and an outstretched arm; to prefer a day in his courts to a thousand in the gates of sin; to leave all we love, and brave all we dread, and follow him; he will teach us to rest in him, and wait patiently for him, in all time of our tribulation; to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.

What occurred in the case of the demoniac is only a foreshadow of what will take place in the state of all creation. The author of that power which racks the earth is Satan, the great usurper; the cause of atrocious crimes, the source of many an evil, unholy, and awful suggestion, is the presence, not of a figment, a fiction, or a figure, as infidels imagine, but of a personal being, possessed of the archangel's wisdom, the fiend's depravity, and the archangel's power to use that wisdom and apply that depravity to mankind. But the day comes, we are told, when Satan

shall fall like lightning from heaven; when this earth, that groans and travails, waiting to be delivered, shall be healed, and its fever laid, and the demons cast out, and holiness, and happiness, and beauty, and loyalty, and love shall overflow all, like a mighty and unfathomable sea. This demoniac recovered was an earnest of it. I explained in previous passages, that the miracles of our Lord were not simply acts of power, or expressions of beneficence, but that they were earthen, foreshadows, pledges of the grand and universal emancipation that will yet dawn upon the world. What is miracle now will be nature in the age to come. Our discoveries and our sciences are efforts to hasten its arrival, and to actualize the prophecies that predict it. What is medicine? It is, if I may so speak, a portion of the virtue the woman received from the skirt of Jesus' garment, left to tell us that disease is not supreme, that there are portions left of his remedial powers, that we are not to despair but to hope. There is enough in medicine to keep us from despair; there is not enough to prevent us from longing for the great Physician to come and heal all: there is just enough to be an earnest and a pledge of that universal redemption when there shall be no more sickness, nor sorrow, nor death.

Having noticed this position, which is perhaps the least important and instructive, I now proceed to examine one that, to my mind, is exceedingly beautiful and interesting. The demoniac went to Jesus, and begged of him that he might be allowed to remain with him, or to accompany him. Jesus said to him, "No, go home, and tell your family what great things God has done for you." Why did the demoniac recovered wish to be with Jesus, and so to accompany him in all his travels and his journeys? He might perhaps have recollected, not the words, because he had not been taught them, but the fact of which the words are the descrip-

tion, recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chap. xii. 43. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my own house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." The poor man expected some such recurrence as this, at least he feared it; he no doubt rejoiced in the deliverance he had felt, but he rejoiced with trembling. He was alarmed lest the spirits that had left him should return with more, and should take possession of him again, and so his last state should be worse than the first. Therefore he says, "Let me be with him that delivered me, for he alone can defend me; let me be with him that had power to expel the demons that dwelt in me, for in him alone shall I find a sure shelter from their next desperate assault." But is there not embodied in the conduct of this poor recovered man a precedent for us? If we have obtained any thing from Christ for which we feel thankful, we shall be jealous lest we lose it. If we have received the forgiveness of our sins, the spirit of adoption for the spirit of bondage, if we have obtained joy for sorrow, and hope for despair, we shall be anxious to guard the precious and deeply valued deposit thus mercifully intrusted to our charge. What can be more natural than to flee to him who gave the blessing in his goodness, in order that he may guard it by his power in the bosom in which he has implanted it. He has little who is not alive to the defence of that little. A life that comes from Christ will ever creep close to Christ for its maintenance; and a blessing that we feel to have been derived from his hand, we shall beg of him in his goodness to preserve unimpaired, and to perpe-

tuate it to us and ours. But perhaps the reason of the man's clinging to him may have been to give expression to the deep love that he felt to him. We need not wonder that this poor man felt new emotions under so new and unexpected circumstances. He had been accustomed to run wild among the tombs, to howl like a maniac amid the desert-hills, to shrink from contact with man and communion with society, as means of aggravating, not removing, the dire curse under which he groaned; the first spot he had gazed upon in calm complacency for many a year, was that beautiful and divine face which looked upon him in his ruin, and restored him from the oppression of the evil one into the light and life and liberty, not only of rational men, but of the children of God; and when he came to his right mind and felt no demons raging within, and saw no swine feeding without, but himself and that divine countenance only, that looked as never man's countenance looked, gazing upon him, his admiration fixed him to the spot, his love made him look long and intensely on him, and love made him cling closer to him, and pray for permission that where he lodged he might lodge, and where Jesus went he might go, that his God might be his God, and Christ's people his people. Is there in this no precedent also for us? Once we were—not indeed demoniacs literally, but we were so in a worse sense than the demoniac; for Judas, though not a demoniac, was possessed by the devil in a more awful sense than Mary Magdalene, or the Gadarene whose history we are reading. We were once then demoniacs, without the irresponsibility of the Gadarene, wandering amid the tombs of time, and many in the charnel-houses of corruption, decay, and darkness, without God, without Christ, aliens to what is holy, beautiful, and true. Christ looked upon us in our ruin, and said, "Live;" the strong man entered our bosoms and expelled the strong usurper, who had

long possessed them. And if we know this fact—for if we do not know it, awful and perilous is our position—then are we instinctively constrained to exclaim, “Lord, to whom can we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life. It is good for me to be here. Thou wilt never leave me, and I will never leave thee, my Lord, my all and in all!”

But whatever were the motives that made the Gadarene demoniac, when recovered from his possession, cleave to Jesus, we have the actual answer that Christ gave him, “Return to thine own house, and show how great things God has done for you.” There seems to be a contradiction in Christ’s conduct; of course, only seeming, not real—like all the alleged contradictions in the Bible—apparent, not actual. We find, for instance, in this very same eighth chapter of Luke, that he restores the daughter of Jairus. One says, “Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. They all wept and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not: she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished; *but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.*” It seems strange, that in the one case he should tell the man that was healed to go and tell every body, and that in the other case, I quote one amid many, he should tell the healed person, or the relatives of the healed person, to tell no one. Why is this? Christ saw and read the heart, the

habits, the tastes, the temperaments of those he spoke to. In the one case, when he said, "Tell no one," he saw a loquacious person who would meditate little and talk incessantly, and therefore he says, "tell no one;" and in the other case, he saw a gloomy, melancholy person, who would brood over the past, and fear for the future, and to him he said, "Go, in the exercise of active benevolence, and tell every body." The prescription for the after-recovery, or the after-lesson, was accommodated to the temperament of the person to whom it was addressed. Now when he said to this person, "Go and tell what great things the Lord has done for you," and when the man said, and showed by his conduct, that he would rather cleave to Jesus, and be with him, we have in this, indirect but striking evidence of the divinity of the character of Jesus. A mere common wonder-worker would have been too glad of having a living specimen of his great power to accompany him into all lands, and to be the dumb but expressive evidence of the virtue that the wonder-worker possessed; but Jesus had no such feeling: he was a man, but he was also more than man; he showed the recovery to a sufficient number of witnesses; but more than that he wanted not yet. His kingdom was not yet coming with observation; it was the silent, penetrating leaven, that was to work its way by the omnipotence of love. It was not to be accompanied by the noise, pomp, and grandeur of a majestic procession. There was no ostentation in any thing that Jesus did; there was enough in all he did for evidence, there was nothing for display. I have no doubt Jesus not only spoke many words that are not written in this book, but did many things that are not recorded here: many a broken heart did he heal, that we shall only hear of at the last day. The miracles that are recorded, are given here as evidences of miracles that are

unrecorded, and were the expressions of that untiring beneficence which embraced the highest, and condescended to the lowest, and the weakest, and the most worthless even of mankind. In the commission of Jesus to the recovered demoniac we have this great lesson taught us—that he that receives the largest blessing from Christ is bound to go and be the largest and most untiring distributer of that blessing. We receive not for ourselves, but for diffusion; we taste the efficacy of the prescription, that we may go forth and praise, and exalt, and proclaim the great Physician. No heart will so overflow with love as that which has been healed by the Saviour's touch; no lips will be so eloquent as those, once dumb, that have been opened by the Saviour's finger; no tongue will speak with the thrilling and persuasive accents of his which Jesus has unloosed. Our Lord will not infringe this ordinance: he will lose an ever-accompanying witness to his power rather than interrupt the grand law, that we are made sons that we may become servants, that we receive that we may distribute. All experience will show us that he that has and refuses to give, will not long have; and that he that knows and refuses to make known, will not long have any thing worth making known.

The command of Jesus reveals another great lesson, precious and instructive. In answer to the man's desire to be with Christ—"Let me be with you, let me sit at thy feet for ever, let me follow thee whither thou goest"—Jesus says, "Go, and tell what the Lord has done for you." This teaches us—and I mean this for the young, who have spare time—that the way, if we are Christians, to be with Christ, and to be with him most closely, is to go out and labour for Christ with the greatest diligence. In other words, God teaches us here, that we are never so near to Christ as when, in his spirit and in his name, we are doing

his work and fulfilling his will. The Sunday-school teacher, therefore, that denies himself many a sweet privilege and many an easy hour ; the tract distributor, the Bible porteur, the missionary, the visitor of the sick, who are all denying themselves privileges to outward sense, are yet in truth drinking deeper of them ; they are all apparently losing sweet communion with Christ—they are all really leaning on his bosom, walking with him closer, drinking deeper into his joys, because they are labouring in his work and for his name's sake. Active co-operation with Jesus is the way of nearest communion with him.

We learn also this lesson—that labouring for Christ according to Christ's command, is the very way to enjoy the greatest happiness that results from being with Christ. This man sought to be with Christ, that he might thus be safe from the reflux of the demons, and might realize perpetually the joy which he then felt. Christ says to him, “The way to bask perpetually in the light of my countenance, is to go out on my errands.” Labour for Christ and happiness from Christ are twins that are never separated ; the first-born is labour, the second-born is happiness. In the future world labour is happiness, and happiness is labour. Indolence and inactivity are not known among the blessed. In this world labour is the introduction to happiness, and without labour for Christ we shall never taste, in all its serene beauty, the happiness that flows from communion with Christ. Christ gives the soul, first, a sweet sense of pardoning love, and then he says, “Go and work in my vineyard.” “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” So he gives the promise, “Go and teach all nations—and lo ! I am with you ;” but, “go and refuse to teach all nations, and instantly I depart from you.” The teaching toil on our part, and the presence of the Saviour on his part, are inseparable. This is a right precious

truth ! Let us try to recollect that the working hand and the happy heart are inseparable : it is God's great ordinance, that we shall enjoy Christ's love and peace and happiness only in doing his work in his name and in his spirit.

A poor monk, who, in spite of his cowl, seems from the fact to have been one of God's hidden ones, was one day, according to a mediæval legend, meditating in his cell. A glorious vision burst upon him, it is recorded, with the brilliancy of noon-day, and revealed in its bosom the "Man of sorrows," the "acquainted with grief." The monk was gazing on the spectacle, charmed, delighted, adoring. The convent bell rang ; and that bell was the daily signal for the monk to go to the poor that were crowding round the convent gate, and distribute bread and fragments of food among them. The monk hesitated whether he should remain to enjoy the splendid apocalypse, or should go out to do the daily drudgery that belonged to him. At last he decided on the latter ; he left the vision with regret, and went out at the bidding of the bell to distribute the alms, and bread, and crumbs among the poor. He returned, of course expecting that, because of his not seeming to appreciate it, the vision would be darkened ; but to his surprise, when he returned, the vision was there still ; and on his expressing his amazement that his apparent want of appreciating it and being thankful for it should be overlooked, and that the vision should still continue in augmented splendour, a voice came from the lips of the Saviour it revealed, which said, "If you had stayed, I had not."

This may be a legend, but it teaches a great lesson—that active duty in Christ's name and for Christ's sake is the way to retain the vision of his peace in all its permanence and power. The peace that passeth understanding

keepeth our hearts and minds continually, while our hands and feet are actively engaged in Christ's work.

While quoting from this incident of the monk, I may state that the very passage I am now commenting on condemns monasticism, monkery, quietude, and the varied asceticism in which the mystics of former ages prided themselves. I say all these are condemned by the simple fact, that active love is nobler than meditative love; that gazing on Christ and communion with him are not to be the end in this age, but only the means toward an end, which is work for Christ. Try to stay with Christ in order to enjoy exclusively his presence, and he will leave you; go forth, as it were, in obedience to Christ's command, to do his will, and he will continue with you. Go out, forgetting self in your sympathy with the sorrows of a brother, and you will find that Christ will most manifest himself to you, and that you will enjoy the greatest happiness.

The next lesson we learn from the sequel of this miracle, is this—that as Christ, in healing the demoniac, had an object beyond him, so, in healing us, he has an object beyond us. Let us ever recollect and act upon this great and important truth. “Let not every man,” says the apostle, “look upon his own things, but also look upon the things of others.” “As every man,” he says, “has received the good gift, let him minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” Whoever, therefore, toils and labours for the good of others, always feels himself happiest in so doing; and whoever tries to monopolize the happiness he has for his own enjoyment, to the neglect of others, is generally the most miserable. The words in our language denoting the highest happiness are words that mean living beyond self, getting out of self, standing outside of self; “ecstasy,”

*extasis*, standing without one's self; "rapture," from *rapio*, to be carried away from one's self; "transport," *transporto*, to be carried beyond one's self: every word that denotes the highest enjoyment also invokes the least selfishness. Human nature, apart from sanctified human nature, can testify that there is no music so thrilling as the accents of the voice that thanks us for the goodness you have done its possessor; and that no countenance beams so beautifully to our eye as the countenance of the orphan and the widow made to rejoice by our beneficence.

The poor man's desire was to remain with Christ; Christ's command to him was, Go and engage in active duties for Christ. Did the man obey? Instantly, and seemingly without reluctance, for it is added, He went and proclaimed in Decapolis the great things that Christ had done for him. Is not this an example for us? Our desires and our duties may very often clash: we may desire one thing, while duty, with its stern tapering finger, may point to us the very opposite. We are to sacrifice our desires to our duties, and never our duties to our desires; we are to leave the warm fire-side when duty bids us, and brave the storm, and engage in the rough conflicts of human life; we are to launch forth from the quiet and sheltered haven when Christ commands, and to cross the stormy and tempestuous sea, saying, in reference to duties, what we are taught to say in reference to trials, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt, O Lord."

But there is something very instructive, too, in the place that the Saviour bade this recovered demoniac go to. He says, "Go *home*, and proclaim." He does not say, "Go into the midst of the venerable sanhedrim, or into the synagogues of the land, and there proclaim what I have done for you;" but, "Go *home*, and do it." Another lesson is this for us! The first impulse of many a young

Christian, when his eyes have been opened, and his heart has been touched, is to go and be a preacher of the gospel, to ascend the pulpit, to lift up his voice in the forum, to call upon men to believe in the midst of the market-place itself. There may be much in this that is pure, but there is something of alloy in it too. We would rather all of us prefer to be the splendid lights that shine upon the world, that men will see and be dazzled with, than the quiet salt that gradually penetrates the world, and, without noise and without observation, makes all like itself. Our Lord, knowing this temperament of ours, says to the demoniac, "Not to the sanhedrim, nor to the synagogue; but go back (what we say to every Christian) to the sphere in which providence has placed you, and into that sphere bring the glorious riches with which grace has enriched you. The gospel is not a scene-shifter, but a heart-changer; the gospel bids the new man go back into the old place; it bids him go into the little pulpit that is at every man's fire-side, and try his hand there, before he go into the greater pulpit, and speak to the whole congregation. Test your missionary powers at home before you try them in the school, in the congregation, the wide world of mankind.

But there is more in this commission of Jesus than even this. I believe there is here a special allusion to that most musical word in our language—a word almost peculiar in significance to the English language, and, it is said, though far be it from me to deprecate other lands, almost peculiar to the Saxon land—namely, *home!* I know not a word more precious. Legislators in the parliament have too much looked on men as individuals and nations; ministers in the pulpit have too much looked at them as individuals and congregations; but there is a sphere, a place more precious than the nation, because it

feeds the nation; more precious than the congregation, because what it is the congregation will be—that is, the home. The little home, the family, is the fountain that feeds with a pure and noble population the large home, which is the country. Loyalty, and love, and happiness in Britain's homes, will make loyalty, and happiness and love be reflected from Britain's altars and from Britain's shores. There may be a *mob*, or there may be *slaves*; but let statesmen recollect there cannot be a *people* unless there be a home. I repeat, there may be in a country *slaves*, or there may be *mobs*, but there cannot be in a country a *people*, *the people*, unless it be a country of holy and happy homes. And he that helps to elevate, sustain, ennoble, and sanctify the homes of a country, contributes more to its glory, its beauty, its permanence, than all its legislators, its laws, its literature, its science, its poetry together. Our Lord began at the first home that was found at Bethabara beyond Jordan—the home of Andrew and Peter; and starting from it, he carried the glorious gospel of which he was the author into the home of Mary and Martha at Bethany, of Cornelius the centurion, of Lydia, of the jailer of Philippi, of Crispus, and finally of Timothy; and these consecrated and converted homes became multiplying *foci* amid the world's darkness, till the scattered and ever multiplying lights shall be gathered one day into one broad blaze, that shall illuminate and make glad the wide world. Let us begin at home, but let us not stop there. It is groups of homes that make a congregation; it is clusters of congregations that make a country. So Jesus felt and acted. All along the shores of the lake of Gennesareth there might be detected successive and innumerable homes illumined by the light of truth, and at morn and eventide echoing with the glad voices of praise and adoration. The poor leper, who was long exiled from

society, and dare not approach it, is restored to his home; and we can well conceive, that when the restored father mingled with his family again, its roof-tree rang with most musical songs, and the hearts within it beat with joy inexpressibly full. A fair maiden is smitten down in her prime; the Saviour sees the dead body laid on the bier, and feels for the weepers that stand around it. He speaks to her, *Talitha cumi*, and the maid arose, and came again to life and light; and that bright flower bloomed in the vase of that happy home more beautiful because the look of Jesus had given it new tints, and the breath of Jesus had given it new fragrance. A son is carried on his bier to his last resting-place, the only son of a widow to whom he was the whole support; Jesus speaks to him, and he is restored to his widowed mother again. Can we doubt that in that family, thus made glad, the name of Jesus was mentioned with the joyful reverence due to the name of God, and yet with the frequency and fervour of the dearest household word? God passed before Moses of old, and proclaimed himself "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;" but I see a procession not less glorious follow the "Man of sorrows;" he walks amid the homes of Jerusalem, amid the broken hearts that throb around Gennesareth, and in his majestic, yet peaceful and quiet, march, he shows himself realizing what Moses had only heard proclaimed, "the Lord God, merciful and gracious." He touches one, and there is life; he lays his finger on the complaining lips of another, and they complain no more; he casts one bright look upon a third, and the home is happy; he speaks one word to a fourth, and it goes into the very heart's depths; and thus Christ rejoiced to make desolate and dreary homes glad, that we, in imita-

tion of his example, may go and begin our mission at home, and exert our Christian philanthropy.

Conceive, if you can, the return of the man whose recovery is recorded in this passage. He went home, and proclaimed not only there, but in all Decapolis, what God had done for him. Conceive, if you can, the picture realized in his reception. He turns his face quietly to his home the first time, perhaps, for years—the first time, at least, that he recollects. One child of his, looking from the casement, sees the father return, and gives the alarm: every door is doubly bolted; and the mother and children cling together in one group, lest the supposed still fierce demoniac, who had so often torn and assailed them before, should again tear and utterly destroy them. But a second child, looking, calls out, “My father is clothed; before he was not clothed at all.” A third child shouts to the mother, “My father is not only clothed, but he comes home so quietly, so beautifully, that he looks as when he dandled us upon his knee, kissed us, and told us sweet and interesting stories: can this be he?” A fourth exclaims, “It is my father, and he seems so gentle, and so quiet, and so beautiful—come, my mother, and see.” The mother, not believing it to be true, but wishing it were so, runs and looks with skeptical belief; and lo! it is the dead one alive, it is the lost one found, it is the naked one clothed, it is the demon-possessed one, holy, happy, peaceful; and when he comes and mingles with that glad and welcoming household, the group upon the threshold grows too beautiful before my imagination for me to attempt to delineate, and its hearts are too happy for human language to express. The recovered crosses the threshold, and the inmates welcome him home to their fireside. The father gathers his children around him, while his wife sits and listens, and is not weary with listening the whole day and

the whole night, as he tells them how one who proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, who is the Prophet promised to the fathers, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, spake to him, exorcised the demons, and restored him to his right mind, and made him happy. In that family their past morning and evening desires and prayers had been, "O that the Messiah would come; O that salvation were come out of Israel;" but that day's delightful privileges, and that day's most precious domestic communion, they closed not with prayer for a deliverer to come, but with praise for one who was come—"Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that is come in the name of the Lord; unto whom, even to Jesus, be glory and honour, and thanksgiving and praise." Amen.

## LECTURE XV.

## THE RESTORED SON.

And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain ; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier : and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.—LUKE vii. 11—18.

IT appears, from the period at which we are arrived in the ministry of Jesus, that, in order to perform the miracle related in the passage I have read, our Lord had to pass through a small city, called Nain, to reach the place of his destination, Jerusalem. Accidentally, the thoughtless world would say, not by the pre-arrangement and in the determined providence of God, the Saviour came to the gate of the city of Nain just as the funeral procession passed by. The circumstance of the funeral procession being found in the gate of the city is explained by the fact I have stated several times before—that interments were not allowed within the walls of cities in ancient times, the bodies of the departed were always conveyed through the gate and beyond the walls of the city, to a suitable place appointed for the interment.

It appears, that on this occasion much people followed the widow of Nain as she accompanied the remains of her only son to their last resting-place. They no doubt did so to express the respect they felt for her; to be, in some degree, a ministry of comfort and sympathy. And you know that there are losses, calamities, and sorrows which no man can remove, but which any feeling man can mitigate by sympathizing in them and with them. This was all they felt they could do to the widow bereaved of her son; and that little they felt it their privilege and their duty to do. You that cannot help the poor can express your sympathy with them; you that from poverty cannot give a penny to the destitute, can give the expression of your best wishes, the utterance of your sincerest prayers. Sympathy with hunger ever softens it; sympathy with rags ever mitigates the misery of them; and if we cannot give (for it is only in such circumstances that sympathy can be a substitute) there is no one that cannot sympathize, because there is no man who has not a heart that was designed of God to do so.

The depth and extent of this poor woman's affliction is expressed in few words, but these eloquently significant. She had lost her husband—she had now lost her son: the first prop of the house was gone—the last remaining prop was swept away; she was a widow, and she mourned the loss of an only son. There is no one loss referred to in Scripture, which is spoken of as so deep, severe, and painful, as the loss of an only son: thus, in Zech. xii. 10, "They shall mourn for her as one mourneth for an only son;" denoting the intensest bitterness. And in Amos viii. 10, "And I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day." A Jewish wife felt it a calamity not to have a son, but it was the most terrible calamity when the only son, the stay and the hope

of the home, was removed by the hand of death. We have, in these words, an instance of those touches in Scripture, where one chord is only gently stirred, and a thousand vibrate with it; where one word only is uttered, but a whole chapter of thought is instantly kindled and called into being by it.

It is said when Jesus saw her thus weeping, and following the remains of her son, he said to her, "Weep not." The words uttered by any other than by the Son of God would have been absurd: to say to a widow following the remains of her only son, "Weep not," is almost to insult her. If there had not been behind the words "Weep not" a latent beneficence that was to make real by deeds what was here audible in words, it would have been an insult. When we visit the mourner—the one that mourns as this widow and mother mourned, never let us say after the first blow of calamity, "Weep not." Who does not know that there are times when grief is so great that it needs an echo in the sympathizer, not an attempt to arrest it? The worse consolation we can give is to say, "Why do you weep? It is not proper to weep so; it is not right." God never warrants us in saying so. When the grief is so bitter, the best way to comfort the weeper is to "weep with them that weep," and give an echo to that grief, as a response from our heart, showing that we have a fellow-feeling. We shall give more consolation by this than by all the little hackneyed, commonplace truisms that are called comforts, which many, like Job's miserable comforters, try to deal out. But from the lips of Jesus these words, which were inappropriate in others, were sufficiently appropriate, because his word was not a mere sound; it was always accompanied with power; it embodied in it beneficence; it carried healing under its wings; it translated itself into deeds; so that whatever he said was no

sooner said than it was done. Therefore, when Jesus said "Weep not," he did not say, "Be the stoic, and cease to be the woman;" but, "Be the woman, and weep now, but prepare instantly to be comforted." How beautiful are these words now, even in their diluted echo! They are a reverberation from the future, when he shall call to the heart of all humanity, "Weep not;" when what is now prophesied, "He shall wipe all tears from all eyes,"—literally translated *out of* all eyes,—shall be realized. I may perhaps explain that the Hebrew word which means "the eye" also means "a fountain;" and when it says "He shall wipe all tears from all eyes," the idea of a fountain is clearly present. The word *wipe* not only means to remove, but to sponge out, to completely exterminate. He will not only take away the tears, which may be succeeded, as it is in this world, by other tears, but he will extinguish the very springs and founts of tears, so that to weep shall be impossible, as it shall be unnecessary. The day comes, then, when that which is now prophecy shall then be performance; and "Weep not" addressed to all redeemed humanity shall instantly be followed by the fulfilment of that prophecy in which we have hoped and trusted: "He shall wipe away all tears from all eyes."

Yet when Jesus performed this miracle which we are now to consider, he did not do it simply and exclusively to comfort the mother. I say the great design of this miracle (and this warrants the other lessons which I draw from it) was not simply to comfort and console the mother. He could have comforted her by the recollection of her dead son just as truly as by the presence of a restored and living son. Besides, we cannot suppose that any one being upon earth exists or gets life merely as means to serve another—merely as an instrument for another's comfort or for another's purposes, and nothing more. Man is far

greater than this: he has a distinct reference to God, to eternity, to truth; and he is not merely born to give comfort to another—that is only one end. The consolation of the mother was the nearest thing, the most visible result, but it was not the ultimate and the only thing. That young man was raised, I have no doubt, his body from the tomb, and his soul brought back from its home, not merely to comfort the weeping widow, but to be also a minister of beneficence and goodness to her, to be the priest of the house in which he had long been the pillar: so that that mother should not only have the joy of her son brought back from the dead to beautify and rebuild her home, but she should also have the joy of the Lord, which would be a greater strength, in his talking to her not only of what Christ had done but of what Christ was—“the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.”

We read that our Lord, when he saw the funeral procession, touched the bier, and said to the young man, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.” Strange, mysterious address! The dead, pale, lifeless, insensitive body, stiff with the rigours of death, is addressed by Jesus in words that would make the experience of humanity smile: “I say unto thee, young man, Arise.” And instantly animal life warmed every vein and artery and limb, and—more mysterious still!—the soul came from the place where it was, and took possession of that body: these words, so softly spoken by the lips of Jesus, were heard by that soul, wherever it was, louder than the peal of the last trumpet, and instantly it came, and entered again its forsaken shrine, and the young man arose, and looked, and spake. When he thus arose, and looked, and spake, we may notice that nothing is said as to what the conversation was. I look upon this, and the sequel of the resurrection of Lazarus too, as indirect evidence of not only the grand dignity but

of the inspiration of this blessed book. If this story had been got up by a regular story-teller—if the whole of these incidents were a mere figment of the fancy—if it were not the actual record of an actual occurrence; the author, and every such teller of a story, would have given whole pages of the conversation of the young man on his return to this world: we should have heard from him what he felt when he left the body, where the wings that were then imparted to him carried him, what porches he passed through, what bright apocalypse he saw in the better land, what company he had, what converse he heard, what songs he joined in, what spectacles he witnessed—all these would have been told with great minuteness, and at great length; and the story-teller would have done it with the greater boldness, because he knew that no wing could follow him to see the district he described, and confront him with refutation or the evidences of its reality. But the silence of Scripture in this respect is positively sublime. The perfect silence on the part of Lazarus, the no less strict silence on the part of the daughter of Jairus, and on the part of the young man the absence of the slightest hint of what he saw, what death was, what he felt, what he heard, is to me indirect evidence that the penman here was inspired by a higher than man, that the record here is the record of an actual fact, and that the holy evangelist wrote this dignified record inspired by the Spirit of God.

When the young man was raised from the dead, we read that Jesus delivered him to his mother. There is something in this act very beautiful. Jesus did not say to the young man, "Now you have experienced my power you are a monument of my goodness, come with me, leave your mother and follow me." He might have done so, and in other circumstances, in the performance of different miracles, he did so; but here, with that exquisite sympathy

with human relationship, with that true human heart which Jesus had, besides his divine nature, he felt for that mother's sorrow, and he who breathed in his last agonies from the cross, "Son, behold thy mother," in this, his ministry of power and beneficence, took care to dry a mother's tears, and bring back the full warm tide of a mother's joy and delight—"he delivered him to his mother." These words alone are sufficient; all that I can say upon them is only to mar their grand suggestive simplicity. He delivered him to his mother, that mother received him. She had once joy that a man-child was born; but what joy that such a man-child was restored from the dead and placed beside her again! And ever, no doubt, as she listened to his voice, she heard mingling with it the words, "I say unto thee, young man, Arise;" and ever as she gazed upon that only son's countenance, she could see there not the likeness of his father only, but also mingling with those features the bright beams of that countenance which was more marred than any man's; and ever as she received from that son comfort, joy, or daily bread, thankfully she took the blessing that the son bestowed, but she looked behind and beyond and above the son, and gave the glory to him who had restored the son to her. How beautiful, we may well conceive, then, did that old home look to that new couple, the mother and the son, who returned to it! It was in their eyes re-consecrated and re-built by the word and by the hand of Jesus; and the recollection of that mercy thus vouchsafed at the gate of Nain made its lintel and door-post and fireside and roof glow with new lustre; it made their songs at morning and at eventide more heartfelt; it became a little sanctuary; their renewed life had new significance, and became, as it were, a perpetual sacrament. Depend upon it, they never forgot that gate of the city of

Nain, nor those words uttered by Jesus, nor the infinite obligation they owed him as the Lord of life.

But I should notice also, in alluding to the expression, "He delivered him to his mother," that there may be in this—and I am sure there is in it—a foreshadow of that which shall be at the grand resurrection of the pious dead; that the delivery of this son to the mother is only a type and an earnest of what shall be when every restored son shall be delivered to his rejoicing mother; and the joy that was felt in the home at Nain shall only be a dim, dim fore-light of that intenser joy that shall be felt in the heavenly home when all lost relationship shall be restored, all suspended communion shall be resumed, and each shall know the other, and reciprocate each other's joys, and sing as they never sang before that new song which is ever new and never old, because it never wearies, and can never be exhausted.

It is said that the effect of this restoration was first felt, or early felt, by the multitude. "When they saw it," it is said, "they glorified God, and said, A great prophet is come, for he hath visited his people." The multitude were eye-witnesses; they saw the funeral, they beheld the dead young man, they heard the words of Jesus, "Arise," and they saw the young man rise. And this gospel record of it was written and circulated while many of these persons were alive, who might and would have stood up and denied its truth if it had not been the actual narrative of truth. The multitude exclaimed, "A great prophet is come:" perhaps they meant it was the prophet, the true prophet that Moses promised, like unto him, raised up from among their brethren, and to whom they should give heed in all things.

We have thus, then, the procession, the dead, the living, the restored, the home made happy. The sun dawned that

morning upon a weeping family and a miserable home; the sun set that evening upon a happy mother and a rejoicing son. That night looked brighter than the sunniest day. It seemed to them as if it were a new day. Let us now learn some lessons from all this.

The first I would desire to learn is, that Jesus was truly, strictly, literally, man. "He had compassion on him;" "he was," as we are told elsewhere, "exceeding sorrowful;" and at the grave of Lazarus it is said he wept. Can I doubt, then, that he who thus sympathized with man was man—that he who thus felt a compassion so earnest, so deep, so inexhaustible, (for it only seemed to accumulate as it met with the calamities of mankind,) was truly and literally man? "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," was his announcement; "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor," was the sermon which he himself preached: "I say unto thee, young man, Arise," was the evidence that he had compassion to sympathize with the weeping, and that he had, in the second place, what I wish next to notice, power to remove the cause of that weeping. He was, in other words, God. I have said that he was man—truly, strictly, literally man; all that can be said of me, sin excepted, could be said of him; he had not merely a body—that is, animal life—but he had a soul—that is, my other part, my intellectual life. But he was, in addition to all this, also God, and the evidence of this is sufficiently displayed in the miracle that was here done. Notice the contrast between the resurrections that occur in other circumstances with the resurrection that occurs here. When Elijah was about to raise the widow's son, he cried unto the Lord and said, "O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourned, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and

cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again." That was a man armed with miraculous powers, doing miracles. But how did Elijah do it? He did it simply as the minister of God, simply as the channel through which God's power flowed, and he recognised that power, and gave the glory to the author of the miracle before and after he did it. But when Jesus comes to do the miracle, he does not first say, "O God, do it," he does not acknowledge, as Elijah did, that he had no power to do it, but he says, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." When the apostles did miracles they did them amid prayer, or in the name of Jesus—"in the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" they proved that their power and authority were altogether borrowed; but when Jesus did miracles, he showed that his power was original, unborrowed and underived. Elijah did the miracle as a man, Jesus did it as God; Jesus was not only man then, but he was also God.

We have also to learn from this passage the hope, that great hope which the apostle eloquently declaims upon—the resurrection from the dead. It is as easy to raise a million of the dead as it is to raise one; the same power that could raise that dead young man, can raise the millions upon millions that sleep, as far as their ashes are concerned, beneath the very dust on which we tread; it is not one whit more difficult, because the difficulty in both cases implies omnipotence, to give life again to all the sleeping dead of the six or seven thousand years that are past. "I am," says the Saviour, "the resurrection and the life. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." That power is not exhausted by its use, it is not spent by distance; he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Persons argue, and I have argued, and in its place we may fairly argue, that we have analogies that show us the possibility of a

resurrection ; in the dry root, so unprepossessing and un-beautiful, under the influence of summer showers and suns bursting into the rose ; in the case of the insect, a repulsive worm in its chrysalis state, by-and-by unfurling its wings and floating like a living flower in the air, in the shape of a butterfly ; we see in all the buds that burst out in spring analogies clear and beautiful of the possibility of the resurrection : but let us recollect, an analogy does not prove any thing, it only says that the divine promise is in harmony with providential and divine facts. And I may also notice, to show how little these analogies prove, that the most gifted of ancient philosophers never dreamed of a resurrection ; Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, saw flowers and felt springs, and yet never thought of a resurrection ; they cannot be supposed, therefore, to be proofs. But one fact is worth a thousand arguments, and ten thousand analogies. You have here, not an analogy, not a dim hint, but a fact that Christ did restore life to one that was dead ; and that one fact is infinitely more conclusive than all the arguments man can use, and all the analogies genius can find out. The resurrection is not merely a thing probable, not only a thing possible, but a fact that has already been done.

Let all that mourn the loss of those that are not lost, but gone before, seek consolation where this poor widow found her consolation. Christ may not recall your dead from the tomb, but he can do better for them and for you—he can fill the chasm they have made with yet richer and intenser consolation. The restoration of the widow's son to her fireside was one way of comforting, and only one ; Christ might have given her richer comfort in manifold ways, without restoring her son from the dead ; he can do more than give consolation—he can himself take the empty place, the vacated niche, and fill it with the ful-

ness of Him that filleth all and in all. He has promised to comfort you under all your trials and your losses, but he reserves to himself the when, and the manner in which he will do it. Ask of him consolation, but leave to his own goodness and wisdom the mode in which he will send that consolation. The restoration of the dead is only one way, and it may not be the best way; he has many more.

In the next place, let us anticipate the reunion of all our relatives, and children, and fathers, and mothers, that have fallen asleep in Jesus Christ. When a relative we love, a child, a son, a parent, dies, and leaves us alone, that stern and indomitable silence that sits upon the cold pale lips, that once were so eloquent with words of affection, is the most solemn thing of all; often we wish, when we see the dead, and gaze on that which was all life, all sympathy; that flashed with joy, or that was channelled with tears—all so indomitably still, answering nothing, hearing nothing, responding to nothing—earnestly we long in such circumstances for some sign from the spirit-land, some beam from the unutterable glory, some sweet voice to tell us audibly and clearly, “Your dead one yet lives.” But no sign comes, no voice is heard, no response is given us. Then, in such a case, let us leave the presence and trappings of the dead, let us leave the chamber of mourning and of wo, and let us go to the gates of Nain; let us call back through eighteen centuries that glorious spectacle, let us listen to these words, “Young man, arise;” and then let us hear reverberating in multiplied echoes from the mighty multitude that saw it, “The Lord hath visited his people, the great prophet is come,” and we shall then know that our dead do live, and that we shall meet them again, as that mother met her restored son. Above all, let us add to this, this blessed fact—that the long procession of the dead has not only been turned by Jesus in

three separate instances in the New Testament, but it has been completely diverted by himself. Jesus rose from the dead, "the first fruits of them that sleep." We may, then, gather spring flowers with which to beautify the graves of our beloved dead from the garden in which they laid him; we may thus learn that death is to the believer but the angel of love, and the grave to a saint but the narrow gate that leads to glory. What blessed hope, then, does this Christianity teach us; what noble consolations does this Bible give us! Let us cherish it, let us love it, let us praise God for it, let us seek to feel it.

We learn here also, that the soul, separated from the body, plainly lives independent of that body. When this young man was raised, if there had been restored to him the mere animal life, he would have been nothing more than one of the brutes of the field; but there was restored to him not merely the beating heart, the breathing lungs, the circulating life-blood, the animal life which the horse, and the ox, and the dog all have in common with us, but there was restored to him the intellectual life and the moral life, the soul which is *the man*, and which man alone has. I have often tried to think—but perhaps it is wrong to speculate—where the soul is when it is severed from the body. It is a very solemn thought. We know, if it be a child of God, what it is—we know what it enjoys, but the locality where it is, we know not. My impression is this—that the souls of those that are gone may be far nearer to us than our absent friends and relatives are at this moment—that the soul of your child, your father, your mother, your brother, or your sister, may be nearer to you at this moment than your actual living brother or sister. In other words, it may be perfectly true, that just as there are minute living creatures which our naked eye cannot see without a microscope, so there may be present

spiritual beings in the midst of us too ethereal for our gross senses to see in this economy. As the ocean is a finer medium than the earth, the air a finer medium than the ocean, there may be a finer medium above all, and that may be where souls now are. There is something pleasing in this ; that those that are gone, as we call it, may be actually present in the midst of us, seeing us, though we cannot see them, hearing us though we cannot hear them, frequenting our homes, visiting our abodes, appearing on our streets, near to us, and close to us. And yet we must neither pray to them, nor need we attempt to speak to them, for we can neither see them nor hear them: It is said by Roman Catholics that departed Christians pray for those that are left. It is not impossible; I do not see any thing unscriptural in the idea that saints that are in heaven may pray in heaven for those they have left upon earth. I do not assert that it is so, because the Scripture does not; but I do not see any thing impossible in it. It is quite a different thing for us to pray to them—that is idolatry, gross idolatry; we have but one Mediator, and that Mediator is Jesus Christ. If this be fact, then, it may be that those with whom we held sweet communion on earth may be merely gone into an upper room in the same house, separated from us only by a transparent vail, a thin partition, in short, that they are only in the chancel end of the same grand cathedral, and are there with us worshipping the same blessed Father, so that the communion of saints, the church militant with the church in glory, may be near and interlacing and intermingling, like the land and the sea. But wherever the soul of a believer is, it is infinitely happy, perfectly happy, and unscathed by earth's troubles. Chalmers said that heaven, the present abode of the soul, is not so much a *locality*, as a *character*. Let there be perfect holiness in any soul,

and let that soul be where you like, there it must have perfect happiness. Wherever there is perfect holiness, there there must be perfect happiness. If this thought can be made good by Scripture, or, indeed, if it is not contradicted by Scripture, let us draw instruction from it. We may be surrounded by a cloud of glorious witnesses, millions upon millions may be gazing upon this battle-field, wondering and waiting for the issue of this grand struggle, longing for that blessed day when to him that overcometh, as it is stated in Revelation, will be given to sit down with Christ upon his throne, as he has overcome and sat with the Father upon his throne.

The last lesson I would briefly notice, as I have already alluded to it, is our perfect recognition of each other in the future. I believe souls now severed from the body may recognise each other; I believe that souls, when restored and reunited to the body, shall fully recognise each other. In each of the three miracles of resurrection performed by Jesus in the Gospels, he restored the raised one to the family from whom he had fled. So likewise in the case of the daughter of Jairus, the maiden was restored to her parents, and they saw by her personal identity it was the same one that died. When Lazarus was raised, he was restored to Mary and Martha, and they knew him and conversed with him. When the young man was raised, he sat up; his mother knew that it was he, and he knew that that was his mother. I think there must be in these facts, so fully and so minutely stated, that the restored dead ones saw and were seen, spoke and were spoken to, and fully recognised each other, a dim foreshadow of that blessed day when all shall recognise each other, and groups shall be in heaven among whom personal friendships, begun on earth, shall last for ever. I do not think that friendship is so earthly in its nature that it perishes with

the body. Jesus recognised his mother in the agonies of death; Jesus had a friend, and that friend was Lazarus; and a disciple that he especially loved, and that was “the beloved disciple;” thus proving that Jesus hallowed friendships and relationships—and what he hallowed has the element of perpetuity, nay, of eternity itself, and shall last for ever. Let us rejoice in this blessed hope—that all circles will yet be restored, that all suspended relationships will yet be renewed, and that the joy the mother feels in the presence of the Lamb shall be reflected in the countenance of the child that feels it too, and that both shall be one ceaseless, uninterrupted, happy family in the presence of God and of the Lamb for ever!

## LECTURE XVI.

## THE RESTORED DAUGHTER.

While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, he said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.—MATT. ix. 18-25.

THREE great instances of resurrection from the dead are recorded in the Gospels, as achieved by him who is the Resurrection and the Life. Two of these I have already examined: I now direct your attention to the last, not the least beautiful and instructive of the three.

It appears that Jairus was a ruler, or, as he is called, *ἀρχη*, a chief person or prince of the synagogue. It would also seem, as this miracle was performed at Capernaum, that this ruler Jairus, the father of the maiden who was raised from the dead, was one of the elders spoken of in Luke vii., and who came to Jesus pleading for a certain centurion's servant, who was sick and ready to die. He was there pleading for the restoration of another; he is here pleading—if it be possible to conceive that he realized the idea of a resurrection of his daughter from the dead—

for the restoration of his own. And what does this contrast teach us? That sympathy with others in their trials is the earnest of succour to us in ours.

The statement that was made by Jairus, when he appealed to the Lord, was, "My daughter is now dead." But in turning to the Gospel by Mark, we find his account to be, "My daughter is even now at the point of death." This seems to be one of those apparent discrepancies in the Gospels which prove that there was not, as has been imputed to the evangelists, a conspiracy among them to write the same thing, and thus to palm a joint imposture on a credulous world. Those apparent discrepancies are the evidence that each evangelist wrote distinctly and separate from the others, that there was no combination to write the same thing, and that independent witnesses of facts are the independent recorders of the performance of these facts; and what seems to be a discrepancy or discord is found to be only a grander harmony when it is really and thoroughly understood. It appears that this maiden, the daughter of Jairus, was so ill that the father rushed to Jesus, fully expecting that she would be dead before he reached him; for be it observed, it is afterward recorded, that the messengers came and told Jairus that his daughter was already dead, as it is alleged in the other Gospel, and that therefore they were not to trouble the Master: showing us that when the father left her she was in that critical state that he was positively sure she would be numbered with the dead before he could have finished his journey. Matthew seizes one part of his statement, "she is dead;" Mark seizes what was no doubt another and preceding part of his statement, "she is at the point of death." Probably when the father rushed with impetuous feeling and paternal sympathy, he exclaimed, as we can conceive in such circumstances, "My daughter is at the point of death;

nay, I am sure she is already dead. Pray come; if it be possible, recover her, if living; restore her, if dead." Thus we have not a real discrepancy, but one evangelist recording one portion of the father's remark, and the other evangelist recording the other portion, and both thus giving a full portrait of what actually occurred upon the occasion.

Now, while Jesus was performing another miracle on a woman who was diseased, who met him in the way, and whose meeting of him is alluded to by all the evangelists as occurring in the midst of this miracle, certain parties came to him, as it is narrated by the other evangelist, and told the father not to trouble the Master, and that his daughter was already dead: conveying their solemn and natural impression, that however efficient Jesus might be as a physician, they could not expect that he had any power to call back life into the cold frame, or the pulsation of the blood into the still and silent heart. They regarded death as the paralysis of all hope, as the close of all interest, as the distinct evidence that man's power had reached its limit, and that there was no help or cure. But what seemed to man utterly impossible, was not so to Jesus, and the sequel shows it.

But before I pass on to the fact of the resurrection of this maiden, let me notice here that we have an instance of death entering into the family of a distinguished, pious, devoted ruler of the ancient Jewish synagogue. We see it legible upon the whole history of the world—that death enters into all circles. The happy family of Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, whose home was so bright, whose sisterhood and brotherhood were so beautiful, is intruded into by death, and the stay, the roof-tree, of the home is snatched away and borne to the grave. We see here death entering into the family of a pious, distinguished, and devoted ruler

of the synagogue; and I need not remark that even royalty itself, with all the appliances that art could give, with all that science could prescribe, with all that wealth could purchase, with all that sympathy could minister, has not been able to attain the ripe old-age which peasants and mechanics frequently reach; thus proving to us that the dead level of human happiness has far fewer interruptions than men are apt to suppose. But when we think of death entering into all circles, the circles of the pious, the good, the rich, the homes of the royal, is it not strange that a fact that stares us daily and hourly in the face, in all lands, and from all points, is so little felt, and so infrequently considered? How is it that preparation for meeting and passing through death occupies so little space in the thoughts and anxieties of mankind? But I will not say death; for death is nothing that we have to do with, except to defy it; we have to lift up our heads and look above it. We have nothing to do with preparing to meet death, but preparing to meet God.] Death is the mere loosener of the strings that moor us to the shores of time; the mere dissolver of the cement that glues us, as it were, to things that perish in the using; and what we are to do is to despise death—not to think of it. It is only suggested to me by death to speak of that subject at all.] Prepare to receive God in our nature, when he comes to you, if such should be your happy alternative; and we have nothing to do with preparing for, or thinking to meet death. And if you are to meet that crisis at all which separates from time and unites to eternity, remember that our preparation for meeting God is not the hour we spend with a priest before we die, or the few prayers that escape amid the agonies of a dissolving frame; but the true arena of the victory over death is the journey of life; the true preparation for dying is living now. The light thing is to die—

the solemn thing is to live. The awful place is not, in my judgment, the death chamber; but the places that are fraught with stirring and tremendous issues, are the counting-house, the place of business, the social circle, the fireside—these are the solemn places; in these the battle of life is fought; in these the victory is lost or won. By what we are there is our preparation or our unpreparation to meet God upon a judgment-seat: it is in these that the soul fights the battle of life; it is on the death-bed that the soul, if a Christian soul, begins to reap the laurels and to seize the spoils of its victory. Never forget, then, that the only preparation for dying as we could wish to die, is living as God bids us live. But I believe the very common and very pernicious notion is, that we are to live a life exclusively the world's; and if we can snatch an hour, when the shadows of approaching dissolution lie dark and heavy upon us, to give utterance to a parting cry, which even animal nature may give vent to, apart altogether from the soul, then all will be well. Far be it from me to cast the least shadow of suspicion upon this—that while there is a pulse at the wrist there is a hope for the heart. Far be it from me to disbelieve—that the dying eye may catch a look of the exalted Saviour; and, looking, even in the agonies of death, may live for ever. But I am speaking, not to the dying, whom I would try to point to that Saviour, but to the living; and I assure you that all experience proves, what all Scripture plainly intimates, that most men die just as they live. Is not this the law of nature—that the previous state we are in is always the preparation for, and gives its tone to, the state that succeeds? We reap precisely as we sow. And what is this meant to teach us but the lesson, Prepare in life to meet God in death? What is manhood? Our manhood is very much what our youth was; and our old age, which feeds upon the past, and can

no longer feed upon the future here, though it should and may feed upon a brighter and better future hereafter, is very much what our manhood was. Is it not the case in trade? It is not the splendid advantage that comes across his path that makes the successful tradesman, but it is the clever and judicious seizure, on the instant, of the advantage, while it passes. Many tradesmen who have been unfortunate and ruined in the world, have had far more splendid advantages offered them than others who have been successful, and have retired prosperous and happy men. It is not the magnificence of the opportunity that meets us, but it is the force and intensity with which we seize it and turn it to advantage. It is not, I am sure, the grandeur or the multitude of our Christian privileges that is securing our final victory, but the instance with which we seize them, and the grace we receive from God to sanctify and rightly employ them. So we find it in taking a larger view of life—that the nursery in which we play a part as children gives its tone very much to the nursery in which we take a part as parents. It is wonderful how little the main, substantial elements of human character alter: we easily let slip from memory events about ten years old, while we easily recollect the things of youth. The last sounds that will ring in the old man's heart will be the song that his mother sang over him when he prattled by her knee, or listened to her loving and affectionate commands. Lessons instilled in the nursery often experience a resurrection in old age, and live when all between seems hushed and utterly expunged. Let us then never forget this great lesson, that as we live so we die; that the present is preparation for the future—not for dying, for that is not worth considering, but for being with God in happiness, or being exiles and strangers to that happiness for ever.

When the news was brought to our Lord that the daugh-

ter of Jairus was dead, we read in the parallel passage that he gave but one prescription—one noble prescription—that which is the key to victory still, as it was the key to victory then—“Be not afraid, but only believe.” This was Christ’s prescription for hope, and not only for hope, but for victory. What is the circumstance, I ask, that makes death seem so insignificant to a Christian? He looks upon it in the light of him who is the conqueror of death. And what makes death so terrible to a man who is not a Christian? Because he sees it just as death came into the world, and has continued ever since. If a Christian meets death, he meets him as a friend, and then he thanks him to let him go; but if he meets him as an enemy, he says with derisive scorn, “O death, where is thy sting?” The great peril is, when man meets death as a stranger, knows nothing about what he is to do, or where he is to lead him; then he may tremble, whether he be a judge upon the bench, or a monarch on his throne, or the occupant of the highest and the happiest sphere in which humanity can be placed. But if the believer has his eye resting on Christ, the conqueror of death, his ear is open to his blessed accents, “Be not afraid, but believe.” If his every-day life be the reflection of the life of Christ, and the life that he lives the life of Christ in him; then when he comes to die, or when he anticipates the hour of dying, he can say, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Christ has illuminated it by the transit of his own glory.” Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; Christ has overcome the sharpness of death, to use the language of an ancient hymn, and therefore blunted it utterly to all believers. And the man that thus hopes, and trusts, and looks at death in this light, has nothing to fear in dying, because it is the struggle of a moment that ushers him into the glories of eternity.

Jesus said of this maiden, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." You are not to suppose from this that she was not really dead, for he uses the same words respecting Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;" and only when they evidently misconstrued the expression, he explained it to them: "Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus is dead." Sleep is the Christian name for death; it is the beautiful and prophetic colour that Christ spreads over the features of the dead, and is designed to intimate, that as sure as a morning comes to the sleeper on his couch, so sure an everlasting morning shall break upon the tenants of the tomb. To this maiden the sleep was very short, and therefore it was not fit to be called death; for already, in her case, the Sun of righteousness had entered through the casement of her chamber, his first beams were falling softly on her eyelids; and one word more, "Talitha cumi," as he spake in another Gospel, "Maid, arise," and she rises from the torpor of death, and mingles with the joys and sympathies of the living.

It is impossible, in looking at Christ thus raising this maid, to fail to notice one remarkable feature in Jesus—the quiet power, the calm self-possession that he indicated. Mourners here, weepers there, distress in another place; and the only one who appears calm, and unmoved, and perfectly composed, is the Son of God. I do not state this as peculiar to this miracle, but as remarkable in all. We must see in every miracle that Jesus did, a manifestation of quiet self-composure and self-possession, the most striking and remarkable. And what was this the evidence of? All great men are quiet men. Evidence of power is self-composure, self-possession. All the greatest forces in nature make the least noise. The lightning flashes, the thunder rolls, and men call that great: but there is a power infinitely greater. The light that comes from

the sun descends with a speed that is almost incalculable, and when it falls upon the earth it makes the secret life of every flower and tree instantly burst into expression, and put forth their foliage; and yet that light, possessed of such power that in one month it will clothe the whole earth with verdure and beauty and blossom, comes so quietly that we cannot hear it, and so softly that it falls upon the infant's eye, and yet does not injure it. All great things are quiet things; and the very quiet that Jesus showed amid the most stirring and startling events, is evidence that if never man spake like this man, never man acted like this man.

Before Jesus proceeds, however, to raise the maiden from her sleep, or rather from her death, he clears the house of the mourners. History tells us that at ancient funerals mourners were regularly hired; it seems strange and absurd to us, yet such was the fact; they were hired in order to express by their lamentations the sorrow that the relatives felt on account of the loss of their near and dear relations. These minstrels and other persons who came to the house—some, it may be, to sympathize, others only to make mourning—scorned the very idea that the maid merely slept. “They laughed him to scorn,” it is said; they thought it most absurd and ridiculous to talk of one sleeping who had given so clear and unequivocal proof that she was already dead. Jesus therefore removed them: it was not meet that unbelief and scorn should be present in that holy chamber, or be witnesses of that sublime manifestation of divine power. He ordered them away; and those that remain are Peter, James, and John, the three favourite apostles, as they have been called, the representatives of the church of Christ, to witness what was done. And standing over the couch of the maiden, like twin funeral tapers, are the father and the mother,

with conflicting feelings and emotions, whether the hopes of restoration were delusive, whether Jesus had the power not only to open the eyes of the blind, but also to raise the dead and bring them to life and happiness again.

Jesus spake to her, "Talitha cumi," Maid, arise, and it is added, "the spirit came again;" or as it is in another evangelist, "the spirit came upon her again." And this, again, is evidence how near that spirit was to her; it is evidence to us that Jesus saw the world of spirits as distinct from the world of matter. It is clear, too, that the soul is a thing distinct from the body in which that soul sojourns. The Jews have an ancient legend, which they believe, that after death the soul of the departed hovers near the body for several days before it takes its final farewell. There may be in this legend of the Jew the basis of fact. In the room where the weeping relatives are, and only the dead body is visible to the eye, there may be present still, for a little time, the soul of him whose body lies before them; and if that soul could speak, it would say to them, "Weep not for me; I am emancipated, unfettered; prepared to take my voyage to more glorious realms—weep only for yourselves." What is remarkable enough, the highest science has reached the conclusion that the last echoes of life ring in the body that seems to us dead much longer than persons actually suppose; and that it is not impossible that before decay begins the soul may be lingering in the chambers into which it is to enter once again at the resurrection from the dead, taking its last and solemn farewell, and, it may be, calling up many of the sweetest, noblest, dearest reminiscences of life. Who has not sometimes observed after the death of a pious man, that the features will assume a placid, calm, and beautiful quiet? I have heard the relatives say, in such circumstances, "He looks more like himself than ever he

looked in his lifetime;" the very hour or two after death giving an ideal portrait of the man, so perfect and so beautiful, that it never was presented in all its beauty by actual life. And may there not be much truth in this? The death-struggle is over; the agony of disease is laid; the machinery of life stands still; it is the Sabbath that follows the life week. The soul is not yet gone; it is traversing the chambers it is so soon to desert; it is retracing the journey, and recounting the battles of life; it is spreading over those features that once expressed anxiety and toil to the world, the calm, the repose, and happiness it now feels, and, it may be, singing in an under tone that quiet vesper song, that solemn requiem, the last notes of which shall mingle with the first notes of the orisons of an eternal and blessed jubilee. Death does not take place, even science will tell you, till decay commences; and may it not be true, that when the body seems dead, the soul and the body, at perfect ease, are about to take the one its farewell of the other, till the trumpet shall sound, and they that were made twain and severed for a season shall be made one, and so be for ever happy with the Lord.

It is said that when Jesus raised this maid, that he commanded that meat should be given to her. Now, to a very careless reader of the Bible, this would seem very puerile: it looks like a transition from the highest sublime to the meanest commonplace exhortation; but it is not so. It is because we cannot appreciate it that we think thus, not because it is so. It seems to me that the last sketch in the miracle is the loveliest of all. The command that she should have meat, is, to my mind, only second, if second, to the command, "I say unto thee, Maid, arise." For what does it prove? It indicates the presence of Him, and therefore makes the analogy complete, who takes care of the least thing as truly as he does of the greatest thing;

it demonstrates the presence of Him to whom nothing is so minute as to be beneath his notice, before whom nothing is so magnificent as to be beyond his control; it is a proof of the presence of that Being who feeds the ant and ministers to the archangel beside the throne; who will not let a sparrow fall without his control, and who will not let a scrapp go beyond and defy that control. So too the command to give her meat, which it is very likely they would forget, is the evidence to me that Jesus not only gives life, but provides for the maintenance of that life; not only gives spiritual life, but will find living bread wherewith to nourish that life.

We have thus seen the dead maiden; we have seen the anxious parents, and the hypocrisy of the hired mourners; we have seen the chamber cleared; we have seen the Sun of righteousness, the Resurrection, and the Life, draw near; we have heard, if not the original, the echo of his words, “I say unto thee, Arise;” and we have seen the soul that had just forsaken, if it had forsaken, the frame in which it sojourned, take up its abode again, resume its throne, begin its sublime functions, and the maid arise, and mingle with the living. Let us rejoice that Christ is still the resurrection and the life of all that are in their graves. That maid, and Lazarus, and the young man, the son of the widow of Nain, and all that fall asleep in Christ, shall hear the last trump, and rise to the enjoyment of everlasting life.

In speaking of the resurrection from the dead, I cannot but notice, what I dare say will be referred to this day in almost every pulpit in the land, the death of one occupying all but the loftiest sphere in this kingdom, whose exemplary and beautiful life adorned the dignities she held—I mean the death of Adelaide, the queen-dowager. All of us must sympathize with the loss sustained by those to

whom she was dear, and who were benefited by her, because never in the history of England, I believe, and I am no flatterer of royalty, was there one whose example was so beautiful, whose charity was so unbounded, and whose munificence so many institutions of our country have beneficially felt. There is, I fear, scarcely a charity in the whole land that will not miss the queen-dowager. There is not in our land a section of the church of Christ which, after having exhausted its own beneficence, has not as its last resort said, "We will make an appeal to the queen-dowager;" and never, I am sure, was a just appeal made that was not answered. I recollect she was asked to give something toward the maintenance of our Scottish church at Holloway, and she sent £50; she was asked to contribute to our mission at Kennington, and she gave £20; she was asked to give something to our schools, and sent, I believe, £10. I quote these simply as specimens of her charity, comparatively minute and trifling; yet instances of charity and generosity on a larger scale, and to nobler and far greater institutions, of which there are many witnesses. I see, indeed, in her life the evidence of a royalty nobler than kings and queens have, and in her character the earnest of a crown more glorious than that of the greatest monarch. It is literally true that she adorned her diadem; her diadem did not adorn her. And while we respect the memory of an illustrious queen, we should rather dwell in our recollections on the memorials of a good, a pious, and a Christian woman. Much as I reverence and much as I respect authority, which God in his providence has either placed or permitted, much and truly as I feel of loyalty to our beloved queen, and reverence to all placed over us, yet I revere the woman more than the queen. The woman is the creation of God; the queen is but the conventionalism of man. And if this be

so, the Christian is higher than the woman, nobler than the queen; for the Christian is the re-creation, the regeneration of the woman by the Holy Spirit of God. It is beautiful and interesting, however, and a matter of gratitude, to see the sacredness of the Christian sustain the dignity of the queen; the piety of the one and the power of the other allied with beneficence, and charity, and love. And we feel the more pleasure in noting this, because the days were, in which royal pastimes and royal pursuits were of a very different description; war, and revelry, and licentiousness were once the only games at which kings played; and pomp, and splendour, and show, and fashion, and dress were the only amusements that royalty indulged in. A great change has taken place in church and state. No such monarchs are likely to reign now; just as no hunting parsons, as they were called, are now any longer tolerated. A purer air has animated palaces; better feelings are now found in royal bosoms. Our consolation, when we think of the good queen-dowager we have lost, is in the equally consistent, and still more beloved queen that we have—a queen in whose character as an individual so much that is amiable, lovely, and of good report is blended with so much that is wise, patriotic, and consistent in her as a sovereign, that we know not which to admire most, the uncrowned womanhood of Victoria, the sister of us all, or the diademed royalty of Queen Victoria, the sovereign and the monarch of us all; thankful that her dignity in the one is only heightened by her consistent and beautiful walk in the other. If we have lost, therefore, a queen-dowager, whose beneficence all bear testimony to, let us thank God that we have swaying the sceptre, and seated on the throne of these realms, one that even the most intense republican must love, that even the red republican could not refuse to obey, and whom we

Englishmen, and Scotchmen, and Irishmen, Christians, I trust, all of us, obey not only because we are loyal subjects, but because we are Christian men, fearing God and honouring the queen. It was, to my mind, beautiful indeed to see, when the queen-dowager no longer shared the throne of a monarch, how softly she fell into the shadow, and adorned the quiet and retired life that she led, by gems brighter than a monarch's crown can have, by deeds of goodness, of love, and charity, and beneficence. She is gone, we can say without hesitation, to the rest that remaineth to the people of God. I have heard from those who knew well, that as her life was spent in doing good, her last hours were spent in the exercises of implicit trust and confidence in that only Saviour whose blood—blessed be the precious Bible that reveals it!—cleanses beggars from their sins, and cleanses monarchs from their sins also; trusting in the merits of that blessed Mediator, who is the only way to heaven for the highest, and the welcome way to heaven for the lowest. May we be quickened by his Spirit; and when our bodies shall be surrendered to the dust, may we, with the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus, and the queen-dowager, and all that have fallen asleep in Jesus, rise, and reign, and rejoice with him, wearing a crown of glory and partaking of an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

## LECTURE XVII.

## CREATIVE GOODNESS.

When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.—JOHN vi. 5-13.

IT appears the crowd that had been charmed with the miraculous cures which Jesus had so often performed, having seen the lame leap, the dead even arise, the blind see, and the deaf hear, instinctively and naturally, it may be in some degree selfishly, went after one who was able to do so many wonderful works. They followed him, too, when he sought, it appears from the preceding passages, to be alone. He neither forbade them, nor turned them back: it was his meat and his drink to do the will of his Father: he suspended the enjoyment of his rest that he might minister to the necessities of the people; his life, like his death, was self-sacrificing and vicarious. This

large multitude came into a desert place—not desert in the sense that nothing grew upon it, for it might rather be called a place of steppes or plains, covered with grass, where there was no possibility of making a purchase, still less of gathering any thing that would sustain fainting nature; and when he found that this immense multitude had been long without meat, and were ready to perish for want of bread, he showed them that if he could heal the sick and make the lame leap like the roe, unstring the dumb tongue that it might praise him and open the deaf ear that it might hear him, he could also so multiply the little bread that it would be able to supply the wants of five thousand instead of being able to meet, as it seemed, the necessities of only five. He therefore answers first the question he addressed to Philip, when he lifted up his eyes and saw a great company, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”—a question it appears which was put by Philip in the morning, to which the miracle, judging from the whole strain of the narrative, was his answer in the evening. The difficulty was addressed to Philip in the morning, that he might think upon it all the day, and work it out as a great problem in his own mind. And only when Philip had come to the conclusion that there was no possibility of feeding them, would Christ begin to show that with omnipotence all things are possible; and that confidence in God is a richer practical supply than the available treasures of the world. This is God’s way of dealing still with his people. There are no such things as superfluous miracles in the New Testament; or works of supererogation on the part of God. He works a miracle where a miracle only is required; he supplies necessities only that are truly felt. He makes man feel his own insufficiency before he manifests the fulness of God,—he causes the creature to see that his cisterns are

broken and empty before he unseals to him the fountain of living waters, that he may drink and be abundantly satisfied. This question was perhaps especially addressed to Philip, because he seemed, by a previous remark which he had uttered in this Gospel, to have made greater progress than the rest of the disciples. It was Philip who, in the first chapter of John, is stated to have found Nathanael, and to have said unto him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." It will be also recollected that Moses had wrought a miracle analogous to that which is recorded here, when he brought, as it is said, food from heaven. We read also that the prophet Elisha once wrought a kindred miracle. It might therefore be supposed that Philip, having pointed out Jesus as that glorious Being of whom Moses wrote, as the prophet like unto him in all things, and whom Elisha foreshadowed as a greater and more illustrious than he, would expect that this Jesus, with greater power than Moses and Elisha had, would be able to perform a miracle that would feed the five thousand even with a few barley loaves and a few fishes. But Philip had forgotten these facts. He had not come to this conclusion. It shows us that we need to be taught the emptiness that is within as well as the unsatisfactoriness that is without. The case of Philip shows that it is possible to know Scripture, and to quote Scripture, and to prove prophecies performed, and yet not be able to see savingly Him to whom all the prophets gave witness. Philip learned slowly to depend upon Jesus. He saw nothing but the outward means and elements and powers of nature, and had no idea, if we may judge from this passage, of the presence of nature's Lord. He unfolded in his character a striking feature, still obvious enough in man, the strange, but true fact, that he never appeals to

a divine power as long as he can work his way by means of human power. The creature never goes to God for salvation till he has found out that there is no salvation any where else. He never thinks of applying to God for interposition in the hour and power of famine, or of pestilence, or of trial, till he has learned that human granaries are empty in the one, and that human prescriptions are unsatisfactory in the other, and then he goes to God. And what a God! After we have tried the creature in all its phases, and found that creature fail, God, instead of rejecting us, as we deserved, for so doing, accepts us when we flee to him as a last resort, and makes us welcome; and heaven is glad that they who found all cisterns broken, have applied to the fountain and found it sufficient.

Andrew was next appealed to, and he seems to have had no more faith or trust above the creature than Philip, for he saith, "There is a lad here which hath five barley-loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" We have in Philip the commercial power at its wits' end: money, a little money, but not enough money in the market. We have in the case of Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, the agricultural power at fault: a little bread, a few fishes, but what is the use of these? We have money and bread both deficient; the creature paralyzed in the terrible emergency, and seeing not one ray of hope, or of light, for deliverance or for safety. So true is it that God paralyzes first our agriculture, next our commerce, lastly our health; and, as recently shown, how precarious are our religious privileges; and perhaps it is just upon the back of the sorest judgments that God is about to cause to shine upon us mercies exceeding abundantly above all we have either asked or thought. We will hope. I must say, that I have of our country greater and brighter hopes than ever. I think it will yet be a Goshen

in the midst of the nations of the earth. Recent judgments, physical and moral, have brought to light an amount of deep Protestantism, hidden and real piety, which I trust is only the beginning of that dawn of brighter and better things which will soon overtake the world. May God grant that it be so!

We read that our Lord prepares a table in the midst of the wilderness, and in order to do so, he says, "Make the men sit down. Now, there was much grass in the place." I cannot help noticing the remark, "there was much grass in the place." A mere writer of a story got up would never have thought of using that expression. It is so natural, so unartistic-like, that it is plainly the evidence of a story written upon the spot, and describing facts that had been actually seen. "So the men sat down, in number about five thousand." God is the God of method and of order. Just take a survey of all God's works in providence and nature. How beautifully arranged they are! what harmony and order among them! And so here he shows the same great law pervading this temporary arrangement, when he bids the people sit down in platoons, or in companies, as the language would bear, like garden plots nicely and neatly arranged; partly because order is one of heaven's first laws; partly because it was so convenient that the poorest and weakest were not likely to be omitted when the whole company was divided into twelve sections, and the twelve apostles were made to minister to those companies. So should it be in our communion arrangements; so should it be in the construction of our churches. They should be arranged so that in the first every one may be administered to, and in the second that every one may hear and see. The grand end ought to be always in view. Architects, ministers, and elders should always recollect the object for which a house is built or an institution is

arranged. It is for practical purposes: every thing as beautiful as can be, but every thing should be subordinated and made to contribute to usefulness. When a church is so beautiful that everybody admires the architecture, but barely hears, or scarcely attends to the sermon, it may be splendid architecture, but it is a bad church. When the sermon is so eloquent that everybody is charmed with the language, but does not think of what it is meant to teach, it may be a very intellectual sermon, very grand, very beautiful, very fine, but it is not worth hearing. And when the arrangement in any thing connected with the worship of God is made to take the place of the real object, the means of the end, the machinery of the result, there is a radical defect at the very core. God is the God of beauty and order, but the good and benefit of his people are the grand results he contemplates in all.

We read that, when he had thus arranged these people, and made them so conveniently seated that they could easily be ministered to, he "took the loaves, and gave thanks, and then distributed to his disciples." He gave thanks. What a beautiful model and precedent for us! The Lord of glory gave thanks for the bread that he held in his hand. Do we ever think sufficiently, that two things are needed in order that we may derive benefit from our daily bread? There is first the bread to be eaten—and that is the least important, although many people think it the most important; and there is next the health to eat it. The most pure bread may be poison without the blessing of God; the most imperfect bread may do us good with the blessing of God. At all events, we who have the best bread surely do not omit to thank the Giver; and those who have all the comforts and luxuries of life, surely they do not omit to give the glory to Him who gave them all; or to show the reality of their thanksgiving by distributing

to the creatures made by the same hand, to whom God has not been so bountiful. And then this thanksgiving presents a contrast to my mind the most striking. In his making the five loaves feed five thousand, we have the interposition of a God; in his taking up that piece of bread and giving thanks, we have evidence of a creature. None but a true historian would have combined and coupled things which seem contradictory, but which when analyzed and seen in the light of the rest of Scripture are full of harmony, and present the perfect One. He that could create the bread, and show that he was God, equally acknowledged himself a creature, and proved he was so by giving thanks. If I am asked, was Christ man? I answer, yes; look at the dependent creature giving thanks for his daily bread. If I am asked, was Christ God? I answer, yes; look at the Almighty Creator creating bread by the breath of his nostrils. If you ask me, what was he? I answer, God who satisfied for our sins, man who suffered for them; the one Mediator, the glorious Days-man, who lays his right hand upon the throne and his left upon us: and so of God and man the twain that were at issue makes one. Christ having given thanks, "distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were sat down:" just as he commanded the prophet to speak to the dry bones and he did so, so the disciples, without questioning, or any discussion, or hesitation, did what the Lord commanded them. And the bread grew as they gave it: what they thought an impossibility became a palpable fact. They asked the questions, the one, how will these pence buy food for so many? the other, there are but five barley loaves and two small fishes; and lo, the men that asked despairingly, in their conscious paralysis of all hope, themselves answered the question by feeding the five thousand with these few barley loaves and few fishes. And what does this teach

us? That to use what we have is the way to get more. The man who will make a good use of the little religious light that he has, is sure to get more. I believe an inquiring skeptic who will live up to the light that he has, will not be left to grope in darkness; I am sure the least enlightened Christian who will act up to the light that shines upon him, will not be left without more. God gives to him that hath, and takes away what he hath from him that makes no use of it. We are also taught by this and by the fact recorded here—the barley loaves feeding and nourishing so many—that a little embosomed in the benediction of Christ can supply many; that much, deprived of that benediction, or blasted by his curse, will feed none. Why is it that bread feeds us, and not sand? Ask the chemist, ask the physician, ask Liebig himself. He will talk to you about this affinity and that affinity, and this process of assimilation and that power of nutrition; but when he has said his all we shall be just as wise as he is: neither know any thing about it. The reason why bread feeds me and sand does not, is the ordinance of God; it is merely the fulfilment, and this miracle is specially so, of that beautiful saying, “Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

We see in this miracle, what I may notice as I pass, an illustration of the text, “Seek first the kingdom of God, and all other things will be added.” This multitude was drawn to Jesus not merely, I think, by seeing the miracles that he wrought, for they were not sick, or lame, or blind, or deaf; but as to the miracle-worker, some in sincere and anxious admiration, others in questioning perplexity, and both to the great Prophet that should come into the world. So enthusiastic was their attachment that they followed him into the desert. Listening to the words that proceeded from his mouth, they forgot they had bodies to be

fed as well as souls to be enlightened; some were so intent upon the enlightening of the one, that they forgot for the time being the necessities of the other. Wonderful is the power that the mind has over the body. Let the mind be intensely interested or absorbed in any subject, and man will forget that he is hungry, thirsty, weary, cold. In the case of this multitude, they were so rapt and fascinated by all that Jesus said, that they forgot there was no food to be purchased and none to be borrowed in the wilderness into which they had wandered. But they followed Jesus, and so far sought first the kingdom of God, and then they found it fulfilled, "and all things will be added." So will it be with us; let us seek first to honour God, and happiness will spring up beneath our footsteps as we seek him. "Them that honour me I will honour." And let our nation, let our country, do so at the present crisis. Let it hallow God's Sabbath; let it forget the possible advantages of a Sunday post-office, and remember the obligation of the fourth commandment: let us try rather to save souls than to save time; let us be more anxious about doing what is duty than prosecuting what is expedient; and we shall see that if the railway and the electric telegraph have been given as means of rapid communication and blessings from God, he has other blessings in store, that will render what is now thought to be expedient less necessary and less expedient than it is supposed to be. Depend upon it, that expediency follows principle, not principle a seeming expediency; and the highest expediency in the universe is unreserved, unquestioning obedience to God.

Our blessed Lord then wrought the miracle to satisfy the wants of them who had left their homes in order to hear the gospel. And they were conscious of the miracle; they saw it, they felt it, and there was no doubt that it was a

miracle. And this leads me to suggest what a miracle is. It has often been disputed in the present day whether miracles be in the church: one party saying they are, the other party saying they are not. The only evidence of a miracle is not fancy nor imagination, but the senses. If there be no visible miracle, there is no miracle at all; for the very definition of a miracle is, something above nature, and that the senses can see and testify to, or that on good historical authority and testimony we can accept as having been done, and so far the evidence of the interposition of God.

How or by what mysterious process this miracle was done it is not for us to determine. There is a difference between it and the miracle of the water being turned into wine. In the case of the water being turned into wine I already observed, that the difference between the vine growing in the vineyard and yielding its grapes, and then ultimately coming from the press and being drunk in the shape of wine, and the instantaneous creation of the wine, was a difference of time: that the ordinary miracle takes a whole year to turn the vine sap into wine; that in the extraordinary one, Christ accomplished in minutes what it takes twelve months in other circumstances to do. But here it was not merely hastening a process, but it was turning a few barley loaves into a quantity of bread, prepared and fit for the people to eat. The only explanation of it we can give is, that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things that do appear. We need to learn this lesson in looking at the miracles of God, that omnipotence can do what we cannot do, but it also can do and does do what we cannot comprehend; so that not only shall our physical powers be put into their proper narrow space, but our intellectual power shall also be taught that it is the power of a creature finite, and not of the Creator infinite. And yet we cannot but

notice that the same power that was here seen is displayed every day. In the seed of the corn that shoots into the stalk, the blade, and the ear, we have a miracle just every whit as great. In the acorn cast into the earth, that develops itself into the gigantic and overshadowing oak, we have a process just as marvellous every whit as turning the few barley loaves into a bountiful and gracious supply. But we are so accustomed to the former process, that we call it the natural one, and give the honour and glory to what we call the "laws of nature:" we are so startled by the latter process, that we are constrained to acknowledge and admit, This is the finger of God. But if the processes were reversed, if the usual law were that the word of some being turned one loaf into a hundred, and if the unusual thing were that a little seed cast into the earth shot up and grew into ears of corn, we should call the latter the miracle. We live amid miracles: every pulse of our heart is a miracle, every inspiration and expiration of our lungs is a miracle, the movement of the arm by the volition of the mind is a miracle; but we are so accustomed to these things that we call them natural occurrences, and only when the same result is achieved by a more rapid or a more startling process do we call it a miracle. God occasionally suspends the ordinary process, and interferes by an extraordinary one, to teach man that creation is not God, and that in God all creation lives and moves and has its being.

But there is one touch in the picture inimitably beautiful, which one cannot pass by. It is the prudent economy manifested by the Lord, who had omnipotence adequate to the supply of twenty times five thousand more. For he says to his disciples after he had performed this miracle and fed them, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." In performing the miracle he moved in the orbit of a God: in saying, "Gather up the fragments

that remain," he reassumed his place, reaccepted the laws, and re-entered the domain of man. In the first, you have the proof that there was present the mighty God; in the last, you have the proof that there was the dependent man. What a strange combination! Bounty the most profuse, economy the most rigid. We cannot but advert to this fact—and I like to notice such as these, because they are better even than lectures upon evidence—I say, the very utterance of these words in the middle of so stupendous a miracle, is to me evidence of the inspiration of the writer. If I had been writing a story, or getting up an account from my own mind, I should have taken good care never to have put in any thing that would seem contradictory, or that would detract from the glory of the stupendous miracle that had been wrought. Mere human writers would have argued thus: If we state that our hero, whoever he was, performed such a miracle, and show him desiring those about him to gather up the crumbs that remain, it will be said, here is inconsistency in the story, here is contradiction, the shading will detract from the grandeur of the figure in the foreground, and we must do every thing to heighten, not dim that. But John wrote by the guidance of the Spirit of God, stated fact, described fact, wrote truth; and therefore you have here the combination of creature economy with creative power; a trait that no uninspired narrator would have given. And yet those who are best acquainted with the laws and processes of nature, know that this is in perfect keeping with what they find in the world. It is most remarkable that, fallen as this world is, it has many vestiges of deity still, there is a most wonderful combination of exuberance and saving, of profuse bounty and severe economy. There are no unnecessary things in nature; there is no needless waste; and thus we see, in the Lord of the miracle, the very counterpart of

the Lord of nature; we thus learn that both results come from the same God, who is over all and in all.

The fragments that remained amounted to twelve baskets full. It is worthy of observation, that in the miracle where four thousand are fed, another word is used for baskets, *σπυρίδαις*, but in this miracle, the word used is *κοφίνους*, the Greek word from which our word coffin comes—a very strange derivation—and some commentators have tried to show that the one indicated the basket which the apostle carried with him to supply his daily wants, and that the other referred to baskets of larger dimensions. This, however, is a very immaterial point, and I only notice it in passing. The twelve baskets full of fragments were a greater quantity than the original five barley loaves and two fishes. And what does this teach us? That love augments, not exhausts itself; that beneficence never becomes poorer by its exercise; that the Christian receives in the ratio in which he gives, so that the greatest giver is always the greatest receiver; and the Christianity that unfolds itself in missionary sympathy, by a beautiful reflex operation, becomes deeper and richer in the heart of him that has it.

The miracle produced a very great impression upon the minds of the people. It was so like the miracles performed by Moses, that the people saw at once in it evidence of the presence of the great prophet like unto him. Instead, however, of looking at the impression it produced upon the people, let me draw some lessons instructive to ourselves. The very first lesson we learn is, here was the evidence of a God. Let us recollect the following distinction: when the apostles performed a miracle they always said, "In the name of Jesus;" when Christ performed a miracle, he did so as the *I am*, in his own name, by his own authority. Now herein is a distinction so palpable,

that I cannot conceive how we can escape the conclusion, that if Jesus was not God, he was something infinitely higher than man ; but he was God, for who could do such miracles in such wise except God ?

And there was in this miracle, be it observed, something greater than in any of the other miracles which I have endeavoured to explain. When Christ healed the lame, when he opened the eyes of the blind, when he unstopped the ears of the deaf, we saw restorative miracles ; they were restoring nature to what nature was, or what nature should be. But in this miracle there was not a restorative or redemptive act, but clearly a feat of creative power.

Let us mark another fact in the miracles of Christ : he never performed a miracle, if I may use the expression, *in vacuo* ; he always laid hold of a substratum to work upon. This seems by analogy to teach us that God is not going to supplant this earth by another earth, and to supersede our present bodies by other bodies ; but out of the present earth to construct a glorious one ; and out of our present bodies, to raise incorruptible from corruptible, and immortal from mortal, till death is swallowed up in victory. And so in regeneration : when God makes a natural man a Christian he does not extinguish him, and substitute another in his place, but he retunes him, he restores him, he disentangles his affections, he dips them in the fountain of living waters ; he requickens his soul and makes a new creature evolve out of the old creature ; he does not create another creature perfectly distinct and different. In this we have a foreshadow and earnest of the age to come.

In the miracles of healing, we had the evidence that Christ was the great Physician ; in the miracle of raising from the dead, we had the evidence that Christ was Lord of life ; in this miracle, the feeding the hungry, we have

the evidence that by him all things were made, and that he is the creator of all, as well as Lord of all.

In this miracle there is a grand apocalypse. He draws aside that all but impenetrable and mysterious mantle, which conceals the Creator from the creature in the midst of his creation ; and he shows us—not indeed sunshine and shower, sowing and reaping—but he shows us Christ, the compendium of them all, and from whom all of them issue ; the Lord of the sunshine and of the shower, the Lord of the spring and of the harvest, the Lord of the fertility of the soil and the produce of the earth. In this miracle we see that the good of things is not in the things, but in the Lord of the things ; and that things are but the vehicles and the exponents of a virtue not in themselves, but proceeding from Him who made all things, and gives to every thing its mission. You have, as it were, here revealed the holy of holies of God's creation. In our ordinary view we have results ; in this view we have the source of results : in our ordinary sphere, we trace, dimly and imperfectly, the creature up to the creature's Creator, but here of a sudden the vail is drawn aside, the light shines into the holy place, and reveals the Creator at the head of all, and we see that it is not the creature that has the virtue, but that the creature is the empty thing which Christ fills with virtue, and charges to his work of ministering toward them that are his.

And who is this hungry multitude in the desert? All humanity. What is this desert? The world in which we live. What the five barley loaves and two fishes? The money, the rank, the title, the honour, the greatness of mankind. And they that seek happiness, satisfaction, and repose in their money, their estates, their robes, their titles, their rank, are like poor Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, seeking nutriment for five thousand from five barley loaves

and two fishes, seeking the living among the dead ; and their own experience will tell them, however bitter the lesson may taste, that they shall never be able to find it. There is no satisfaction in any created thing without Christ's blessing upon it, and in it. Any possession which we have, disrupted and dissociated from Christ, will not prove a blessing in our experience. When the heart is heavy with sorrow, nothing upon earth will satisfy it. I have seen the heart so depressed frequently that it has wished the sun would not shine, that the birds would not sing, that there should be nothing musical heard, and nothing beautiful seen. At such a moment, when the heart is utterly desolate, life and riches, titles and honour, all appear in their true light, all are seen at the right angle, and are pronounced by such a heart to be bitterness, and vanity, and vexation of spirit. And so it is really and truly, if we could look at all these things just as they are. It is the presence of Christ in the blessing that makes it sweet; it is the absence of Christ from the richest and best things that make them utterly worthless.

To have all things, and to hold them, and to feel that we hold them from Christ's hand, is the true way to enjoy them. As long as I receive what I have, whatever it be, from Christ, so long uncertainty and anxiety are scattered. I then begin to feel, that if the harvest fail the Lord of the harvest remains; if my health fail, and medicines and prescriptions and earthly physicians can do no good, the great Physician still remains; if provision leave me, the great Provider does not. But when we look at the thing, and not at the Lord of the thing, then when the provision fails, or when health goes, or when the harvest comes short, all is gone, and we have nothing to fall back upon. But as long as man can feel that these things, while they last, are the expressions of God's goodness, and when these

things go, that the author and the giver of them still remains, there is thereby communicated steadiness and consistency to every pulse of man's heart, and to every footstep in man's walk, and this becomes the victory that overcometh the world.

In the next place, when we receive blessings, whatever they are, from Christ's hand, and regard them as the expressions of his gift, all created things taste of a sweetness they never had before, and all blessings become, as it were, double blessings. I have no doubt when these poor people received the bread that Christ had so blessed, and so multiplied, that they felt a sweetness in that bread that they never experienced in any bread before. Pious men have learned to look to Christ as the giver of their blessings, and to see the cross upon the poorest crumb that they have; in other words, they have realized that good idea which the Roman Catholics carnalize, as they do every thing, when on Good Friday they draw a cross on the bread they eat, and think it is all thus sanctified: it is just the shell or husk of a great and true thought, viz. that every crumb of bread has the cross of Christ upon it to the eye of faith; that the least mercy is the purchase of his blood. As soon as we can see and feel the great fact and reality, that our largest and least blessings are derived from Christ, we shall see Christ's image reflected from every thing; we shall hear the sweet tones of his voice running through all sounds; we shall taste in bread something sweeter than bread; all life will become to us a grand sacrament, earth itself a communion table, the whole world, as it were, a eucharistic festival; and all men will be felt to be brethren and fellow-communicants; and to our eye the very desert will rejoice, and the wilderness blossom as the rose.

And then, in the last place, the result of the continuous view of Christ giving all, and doing all, is that we become

daily more assimilated to him, and grow more and more like him: by the constant practice of rising from the gift to the giver, from the bread to the bread-giver, we come to drink into his spirit, and with increasing speed conformed to him. And thus our daily meals become Scriptures, our commonest acts become divine ones; we see him acting in all, and hear him speaking in all; new lights sparkle to us upon the mountain-tops; a new beauty glows in every landscape; the earth becomes girdled with a richer and more glorious zone; and we see brethren in heights and in depths, in palaces and in huts, and in hovels; every day becomes a Lord's day, and its dawn the dawn of that millennial day when the giver shall take the place of his gifts; and men shall live and rejoice, not in the streamlet, but in the fountain; not in the creature, but in the Creator; not in the dead bread, but in the living bread that cometh down from heaven. Let us, in the mean time, follow Jesus, into the wilderness if needs be; let us trust in Jesus for the supply of the wants that we feel; and while we ask him for the bread that perisheth, let us ask him that he would give us that better bread that endures unto life eternal.

## LECTURE XVIII.

## THE BLIND MAN.

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and

said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.—JOHN ix.

I BELIEVE that this chapter is one of the most expressive sketches of contrasted human character that is contained in the Bible, and is not the least suggestive, to every one that reads and thoroughly understands it, of important practical reflections.

It appears from the close of the previous chapter, that Jesus had been proscribed and persecuted by the Pharisees; for it is said, “They took up stones to cast at him, but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” And this ninth chapter, which is evidently the sequel of the previous one, goes on to say, that “As he passed by [running from the stones of the Pharisees] he saw a man that was blind from his birth.” Teaching us the remarkable and important lesson, that the persecution which Jesus experienced

from some only led him to minister more graciously and beneficently to others; the evil treatment he experienced from one class only made him more busy in expressing his mercy and infinite goodness to another. No ill treatment experienced by Jesus arrested his compassion. While he runs from the stones of the Pharisee, he stops, notwithstanding the shower that followed him, to open the eyes of one that was born blind!

It is remarkable that the blind man says nothing: he seems to have been dumb, as well as blind; but the eye of Jesus saw him, and the heart of Jesus had compassion on him, and the hand of Jesus instantly cured him. How true is this fact in a higher sense! Christ looks upon us before we look to him; he pities us before we pray to him; his eye is fixed on us in infinite compassion before our hearts respond to him in adoring gratitude and praise.

It appears that this man was blind from his birth; and from several expressions that occur in the chapter, he seems to have been a well-known and familiar beggar, that everybody knew, that all had seen, and perhaps were accustomed to relieve, as they passed to the feasts and festivals of Jerusalem. Seeing this person, then, the disciples of Jesus, not the Jews, so far but not perfectly enlightened, asked the question, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Three explanations have been given of the origin of the question. The first is, that certain of the Jews believed, from tradition, not from Scripture, in the transmigration of souls, a dogma still held by the Buddhists in India, which alleges that the soul goes from one person to another, or even from an animal to a man, or from a man to an animal, according to its faithfulness to its trust in the place in which God first planted it; and the Jews thought this man, or his soul, had inhabited a previous organization, and in that organ-

ization had sinned, and that he was born blind as a penalty for that previous sin. The second explanation is given by Lightfoot and others, who say that many of the Jews believed that previous to birth an unborn infant could sin, quoting the case of Esau and Jacob striving for mastery or pre-eminence before they were born. Another explanation suggested by some is, that God foresaw that this man would commit some great sin, and therefore thus early afflicted him; but retribution follows punishment, and the idea that he was previously punished for sin that he subsequently committed, is so repugnant to all the analogy of God's providential and retributive dealings that we cannot for a moment admit it.

But instead of speculating upon this question, let us see how Jesus treated it. Before doing so, however, I may notice how much of truth there was in the question, and how much falsehood also was in it. When the disciples asked, "Who hath sinned?" they evidently assumed the fact, universally true, that sin, is the source of suffering. If there had been no sin, there never had been felt any suffering. But they assumed in addition to this another idea, that man's punishment in this life was proportioned to his sin in this life. This is not correct; because hell is pure, unmixed evil, and pure and righteous retribution, while heaven is pure, unmixed good, and pure, unmixed reward; but in this world the two powers are in collision—holiness and sin, the powers of evil and the powers of good; and God uses suffering as a medicine to his own, and the greatest sufferer is not always the greatest sinner, and the most prosperous man is not always the loftiest saint. "For," says the Saviour, "think ye that those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all men? I tell you, nay"—that is not the inference you are to draw; but the inference you are to

draw is a far more precious one, a practical and personal one—"except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Still, the main idea of the disciples was just, that sin is the root and that sufferings are but the branches. That sin causes suffering who can doubt who has ever witnessed an infant die? That infant never committed actual sin, yet it comes under the doom denounced upon humanity, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But while that infant's death is the evidence of sin somewhere, of sin touching at some point, let us rejoice to know that that infant's certain salvation is the evidence, that if sin has so abounded that it smites the babe that has not sinned after Adam's transgression, grace has much more abounded, and saves the babe that cannot personally, because physically incapable, believe on the second Adam for its salvation. There was also a measure of truth in the other idea contained in the question of the disciples—"Who hath sinned, this man or his parents?" Everybody must admit a fact not peculiar to Revelation, but which is legible on every chapter of God's providence, that the fathers do eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth do stand on an edge, to use the language of the prophet—that there is a connection between the sins of the parents and the sufferings of their offspring. Is it not also a fact in Providence?—a parent leads a dissipated life, destroys his health, his vigour, and his mind—his children that he leaves behind him are the sufferers. We see it in civil law: a nobleman commits high-treason—he loses his coronet, and his son is born a commoner. We read it next in God's word, (and thus the three kingdoms are in harmony,) where it is said, "Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children;" but in all three it is not visiting the children with eternal ruin because the parents have sinned, but with temporal chastisement or suffering,

that their parents may see in their suffering the effects and fruits of their own transgression. And I can conceive no more dire punishment to a profligate, debauched, and abandoned parent, than to see his sins staring him in the face from the suffering of his children; and every time he hears the cry of one's agony, or sees the sufferings of another's physical debility, or stands by the grave that contains the ashes of a third, what a stern and eloquent rebuke of his past transgressions must rise and pierce to the very depths of his heart, preaching to him repentance and the need of forgiveness of sins. The very reason why God has thus arranged it is, that parents may be more prayerful, diligent, and exemplary. In looking sometimes into judicial proceedings, I have noticed that when a parent who has been guilty of some great crime, and has thus made himself liable to banishment or a heavy fine, adduces as a plea for mitigation of penalty, "I have a wife and six children, and I hope, therefore, the punishment will be mitigated,"—the answer of the judge, I have noticed, in every case has been, "You ought to have thought of this before you committed the sin;" thus reminding us that the sin of the parent is visited on the children. So little injustice, then, is there in the proposition that is declared in the Bible, that it is recognised upon our tribunals, and is witnessed in all the providential dealings of God among mankind.

Let us look, in the next place, at our Lord's reply: it is after all the more practical one; it will show that the disciples had no business to ask the question; and that when we see children suffer we are not warranted, as spectators of their suffering, to conclude that their fathers sinned, and therefore the children suffer the penalty. Our Lord rebukes this idea altogether; and I think it is one of the most beautiful and striking evidences of the infinite

wisdom of our blessed Lord, that he always turns man's mind away from the sphere in which it loves to revel, the sphere of uncharitableness, misjudgment, and wild speculation, and brings it back again into the plain high-road of common duty, obligation, and responsibility. He therefore says to them very strikingly, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." He does not mean by these words that he was afflicted on purpose that God's works might be made manifest; but that the inference we are to draw from the poor man's blindness is, that it shall issue to the glory of God; as if he had said to his disciple: "Do not seek in the life of the parents the cause of the blindness of the man; do not pry into the secrets of families, and fish up imaginary causes of the sufferings of the parents or the diseases of their children; do not try to ascertain by guessing what can have brought this judgment upon that family, what has entailed that misery upon another family; but see whether you cannot seize the suffering that exists as a fact, and on that fact build a superstructure of good to mankind and glory to God whose providence has permitted it. You are not, therefore, (as if our Saviour had said,) to speculate upon the blindness of this man, or upon the deafness of that man, or upon the sufferings of a third; but to see what good can be extracted out of each visitation you meet with; in other words, to ascertain how sweet a flower may grow from so bitter a bud. That the works of God may be made manifest, is to be the end and aim of your study of the suffering of this man. This is the inference you are to draw, this is the light in which you are to look at it; you are not to try to search out hidden springs of misfortunes, which you never can accurately detect, but to see what lesson of duty, or of obligation, you can gather from facts which you can

easily distinguish." And so I say, with reference to the recent epidemic\* that overflowed our land. I refer to it, perhaps some will think, too often; but we are forgetting it too quickly to make it unnecessary to refer to it often. Instead of doing as some did—trying to discover what sin in the government, or what wickedness in the people, what fault upon the bench, or what flaw in the subject—whether it was sin here, or short-comings there, that caused it—instead of thus speculating upon the causes that brought down upon us the judgment of God, let us learn the lesson our Saviour here dictates, and see what duties of new devotedness, what obligations to fresh beneficence, what good we can do to make that great minister of judgment to be after all a minister of mercy, so that the poor of after ages shall bless their fathers, when they are gone, and say, "They laboured, and we enjoy the fruits of their labours."

To the man himself, however, we can see, his blindness was scarcely a calamity; the result shows it. At this moment, when Jesus looked upon him, he must have felt that the unsettling Sun that rose upon his soul in the midnight of his physical blindness, was more than a compensation for all the privations he had endured. God thus often gives compensatory elements. In the inner light which that man began now to see, he had a compensation for the absence of the outer light, which man's heart can feel but man's tongue cannot express. It is so still. Upon the bosom of the blind there often shine the splendours of an unsettling sun, so much so that I have heard of blind men, made Christians by the grace of God, who have said they deprecated the removal of their blindness lest the inner light, which they so much enjoyed, should ever be ex-

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\* In 1849.

tinguished. Hence, too, we find that upon the souls of the deaf, there often sound the chimes of celestial melodies ; the lame man has been made to mount as with eagle's wings ; and the old man in the decrepitude of decay has felt all the elasticity and vigour of youth ; for a new heart given to an old man makes him, by the grace of God, to feel young and take heart for the pilgrimage of life again.

Our Lord adds this remark upon the conversation which he held with his disciples : “I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day ; the night cometh when no man can work.” This has been cavilled at ; as if our Lord meant to say that he could only work during his biography on earth ; and that his saying “the night cometh when no man can work” is contradicted by the fact that his apostles worked, and worked successfully, after him. All this arises from a misconception of the true meaning and origin of the words he used. He quoted a popular proverb ; he says, “The proverb is, Work while it is called to-day ; the night cometh, when no man can work.” This is true, it is true literally, it is true morally, it is true eternally ; and now while the day lasts, while the opportunity endures, I must work, knowing that the night of my death cometh, when I shall have finished my course ; and knowing, too, that to each man there is a day, which his allowing to pass away prevents him from doing what belongs to that day. Is it not found in our own experience, that each day has its own duties ? If you neglect the duties of to-day, you never can make up for them to-morrow, because each day has duties that completely fill it ; and if the duties of to-day are neglected, you cannot crowd them into to-morrow. You require all your strength and all your power to do to-morrow’s duties ; and if you miss one day’s duties, you have left undone that which

never can be done. So our Lord says: "Work while it is called to-day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

Our Lord then took the moistened clay, it is said, and applied it to the man's eyes, and he immediately saw. Now what was the design of our Lord in thus using clay? I answer, that, judging from the whole face of the narrative, it was to make the blind man sensible of the fact that it was Jesus that healed him. The man could not see Jesus, but he could feel his hand touch his eyes with the clay; he could be made conscious of going and washing, and then seeing. Or it may have been, perhaps, to convince those that stood by that the virtue that healed was in Jesus. Whenever he performed a miracle, he invariably used a medium: sometimes the medium was a touch, sometimes it was a word, sometimes it was clay. There was no more virtue in the clay than in the touch, and no more in the touch than in the word; the virtue was in Christ. But the reason why he used the medium, whether it was clay, or a touch, or a word, was to show sensibly to the eyes of the spectators that Christ was the Fountain, and that from him direct to the subject of infirmity the healing virtue flowed. Christ can work without means, or against means, or above means. A straw in an infant's hand, directed by him, is mighty; a sword in a giant's hand, blasted by him, is impotent and useless.

Our Lord then says, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam;" and the man did it. "Siloam," says John, "which is by interpretation, Sent." This, perhaps, was to try his obedience; just as in the almost analogous case of the miracle performed on Naaman the Syrian, concerning which we read that "Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was

wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." This man, however, in favourable contrast, obeyed the command, and went, and washed, and saw.

It has been very much disputed what can have been John's reason for saying, "which is by interpretation, Sent." There is no evidence that it is in any way a type of Christ, or that it was associated with evangelical truth. The presumption is, that John heard in the very word *the pool* the sound of a Saviour's mission, and that he saw, as it were, reflected in it the brightness of his Saviour's face, even of that Saviour who was *sent* by the Father. The word repeatedly used to describe him whose life was a mission, or a constant sending, was instantly suggested to the evangelist by the name of the pool of Siloam.

The man, we read, saw; and the moment he saw he returned to his home. The dialogue that takes place there at the fireside is remarkable. No doubt his parents, his friends, all his neighbours crowded into the house to see this wonderful transformation in the case of a well-known blind beggar, now perfectly seeing and perfectly happy. But so incredulous were they that they could not believe it. "Some said, It is he." How very natural! Let a blind man's eyes be opened, and the change that takes place is much greater than the space occupied by the eye. A blind man walks with his head back, and puts his foot or his hand foremost, to feel that the way is clear, but the moment his eyesight is restored the head resumes its natural position. Not only is the face altered, but the whole shape, tone, mannerism of the man undergoes a complete transformation. We can therefore easily conceive how naturally some of his neighbours said, "This is he; and

others said, It is like him ; but he said, [which settles all disputes,] I am he"—whatever I may be like, I am he. They doubted his identity, and asked him how the change took place. He gave them the simple story: "A man [for he was not yet convinced that Christ was the Messiah] made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash ; and I went and washed, and I received sight." The next thing his friends and neighbours did was to bring him to the Pharisees. There was a smaller sanhedrim that always sat in Jerusalem to try all minor cases, to receive reports of all religious matters ; they brought him to this sanhedrim, not out of a malevolent or hostile feeling, but rather in order to get the case perfectly explicated, in order to ascertain whether a miracle had been wrought, and what was the amount of credit due to this man who had wrought so wonderful a miracle. They, therefore, it is said, brought him to the Pharisees, who asked him how he had received his sight. We see the carping Pharisee at once there. They knew as well as the man did that Jesus wrought miracles, for they had seen several ; they had not the least doubt it was an actual miracle, and they did not ask, "Is it a fact that your eyes have been opened ?"—this would have been the question of a plain unbiased judge—but, "*How* did he open them ?" Notice the man's reply ; and in the reply you will see how transparently genuine, and authentic, and real the narrative is. When examined by his neighbours, his statement is long, minute, and frank. He says, "A man made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash, and I went and washed, and I received sight." But when he is cross-questioned by the Pharisees, whose hostility he well knew, his answers assume a more cautious shape ; he replies much more briefly, and says, (ver. 15,) "He put clay upon

mine eyes, and I washed and do see." We clearly see how cautious his reply was to this synod or ecclesiastical court that inquisitorially examined him, and how strongly it contrasts with the frank, open manner in which he replied to his neighbours and parents. The moment he replied, they said, "What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?" This reads badly: it means, "What do you say? Do you mean to say that he has opened your eyes? and what think you of him, if he has done so?" The man answered with great frankness, "He is a prophet." "But the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that received his sight." And when the man had made his statement, we read, (ver. 16,) "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them." This lets out an interesting fact, that in this sanhedrim there were two parties. The one party does not try to meet the fact that a miracle was done, and disprove it, but they ask how it was done, urge that the man that did it cannot be a prophet, or the Messiah, for he has broken the Sabbath. The other party in the sanhedrim, who, from the mode in which they started their difficulty, evidently felt that they were a minority, and could not carry the day, put in the quiet question, very suggestive however, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" Is there any evidence at this time in the condition of the Jews indicating that there was such a minority? Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were constituent members of this very sanhedrim; and while the great majority argued that the man must be a bad man because he had done this miracle on the Sabbath day, these men of nobler mettle, rising superior to the

mere partisanship of the age, impressed with the magnificence of power and beneficence concentrated and combined in all that Jesus did, afraid to take too decided a part, yet determined not to be silent when truth was threatened with martyrdom, lifted up their still, small, but singularly suggestive voice, and said, "How can a man that is a sinner [that is, an impostor, a thoroughly bad man] do such miracles?"—so stamped with evidence of power, and so replete with proofs of beneficence. We cannot believe that he is an impostor, or a sinner. The Pharisees again put the question, "What sayest thou? we have heard one explanation, and we have found two members of the sanhedrim who dispute it—What sayest thou? What is your idea of the man?" It was a question, but it was, at the same time, a hint to the man, (seeing that there was a vast majority against Christ, and only two individuals for him,) insinuating that the less he said for Christ the better, and that if he could get his conscience and his tongue to co-operate in stating his impression that Christ wrought miracles by the power of Beelzebub the prince of devils, he would be promoted, get some preferment, or some valuable situation. But the witness was an honest man; he was frank, generous, and grateful for the miracle of which he had been the subject; and he replied at once with great manliness and real honesty, fearing neither their frown, nor desiring their approbation, "I believe he is a prophet." They were foiled; they expected something to help them, but they found that which more and more entangled and perplexed them. Seeing they could make nothing of the man, they resolved to ascertain if they could detect in his statement any thing that would clash with the statement of his parents. They therefore sent for the man's parents and spoke to them. "The parents," we are told, "answered and said, We know that

this is our son, and that he was born blind; [we cannot deny that: everybody knows it;] but by what means he now seeth we know not, or who hath opened his eyes we know not." And they added, with great cunning and great respect for their personal safety, "He is of age, ask him;" recollecting that if any one confessed Jesus, he was instantly to be cast out of the synagogue. The Pharisees expected that the parents would have contradicted something the son had said, but they found it otherwise; the parents were too honest, or rather too convinced of the impossibility of disproof, to deny that their son was born blind; and they were too honest to deny that he now saw, or rather, they felt they dared not do so; but, at the same time, they were too prudent, as this world would call it, to say that Christ or a prophet had opened their son's eyes, because they knew quite well they would be cast out from the synagogue if they confessed Christ; they therefore cautiously and quietly shifted the responsibility from their own shoulders and threw it back upon the shoulders of the son. Were not these parents a type of a party still existing? Is there not a class in every congregation who are too convinced that the Bible is true, and Christianity from God, openly to deny it; but who are too respectful to the fashion of the age, or the praise, the censure, or the profits of the world, manfully to say, "We are Christians, and we believe that living, vital religion is from above;" and therefore when they speak to persons before whom they are anxious to take care how much they let out, as well as how much they keep in, they say, "We think so and so; no doubt the Bible is true, but really, instead of discussing the matter, let us turn to the business before us; if you will come next Sunday, and hear our minister, you will find one able to explain his own sentiments." They wish to say nothing upon a subject

which comes too close to their own consciences. Even infidelity has remarked, that if Christianity be true, there must be few upon earth that really believe it, because the life and sacrifices of Christians do not indicate that they feel the weight and responsibility of a religion that demands and suggests so many.

The sanhedrim again dealt with the man ; and in verse 24 it is said, “Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise ; we know that this man is a sinner.” Here were gross fraud, falsehood, and deception. They insinuated to the man, when they called him a second time, “We have now seen your parents, we have thoroughly examined the whole matter, and we are now at the bottom of it, we are in the secret ; do not venture to assert again that Christ opened your eyes ; we have found it a *delusio visus*, or a complete trumped-up story, a thorough fiction ; you are the victim of a heated imagination, or a deceiver ; no real miracle has been wrought : give God the praise ; we know Christ is an impostor, and that your idea of him is altogether absurd. Just take the hint ; deny that Christ wrought the miracle ; do not persist in asserting what we are prepared to disprove if you attempt to do so.”

How did the man receive all this ? His answer was, “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not.” He does not mean to imply that he had any doubt in his own mind, but he means to say, “I do not enter upon that discussion ; whether this prophet who has opened my eyes be a sinner or an impostor or not, I am not now here to discuss with you—that is for you, the superior officers of the church, to discuss and settle among yourselves ; but the matter of fact (as a plain, honest man, he says) I can thoroughly understand, and it is this—one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” What common

sense was there here, what candour, what honesty ! And how great a rebuke to those ecclesiastical officers who tried to lead him into deception, and into the utterance of a lie ! There are many in every Christian audience who can testify in a higher sphere to the same blessed experience. Many a one, I have no doubt, in my own congregation, may be able, and is able, to say, What the external or internal evidence of Christianity may be I know not ; what Butler says, what Chalmers argues, I know very little ; what the evidence from miracles is, or what the testimony from history is, I am not competent to discuss, to narrate, or even able to remember, if I ever read it ; but one thing I do know, that once I was blind, and now I see ; once I was dead in sins, and now I am alive to God ; once I was poor indeed, and now I am unsearchably rich ; once I looked into eternity and saw nothing but a dark and repulsive blank, now I have been taught by that book, called the Bible, the origin of which, the history of which, the outer evidence of which I know comparatively very little, to call God my Father, and heaven my home ; and no logic that man can use will ever convince me that this religion is not from God, for a religion that comes from God is the only religion that can lead a man to God ; and I am therefore satisfied.

Thus the Pharisees, finding that the more they expiscated the matter the less they really gained, again asked the poor man, "What did he do to thee ? How opened he thine eyes ?" The man then became irritated, and said, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would ye hear it again ?" And then, with consummate irony, which must have told with tremendous effect upon their feelings and passions, he says, "Will ye also become his disciples ?" "Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple ; but we are Moses' disciples :

we know that God spake unto Moses ; but as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." Then the man answered, resuming all his past coolness, "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." This one single layman puzzles a whole synod, call them bishops, archbishops, presbyters, or what you will,—he puzzles them all. And why? Because truth in one man is mightier than a lie in a whole synod, general council, or assembly. The meaning of the phrase "from whence," is this: they argued that Christ was from beneath, that he did miracles by the power of Satan. He says, "This cannot be ; it is strange ye do not know whence he is ; Satan does not open blind men's eyes, or unstopp deaf men's ears." They argued in a previous part of the discussion, "This man is a sinner, and God does not hear sinners." The man takes the premises they laid down—namely, that God does not hear sinners, and says, "Here is a man that has been heard of God, and armed by God with miraculous power ; and therefore, on your own terms, on your own premises, there is evidence that the man is not from below, but that he comes from above." Nothing can be more delightful than to see this great and pretending synod, this assuming camarilla of scribes, and Pharisees, and lawyers, these proud asserters of the independence of the church, and its exclusive jurisdiction over all things, temporal, ecclesiastical, civil, and spiritual, thus puzzled and perplexed, and put down by the plain statement of truth by an honest man, gifted with common sense, and with nothing more. The tables are beautifully turned ; the scholar instructs the teacher ; the layman is wiser than the master ; the pew puts the pulpit right ; the blind man sees, and the seeing men are blind ; and the humbling lesson that the synod

learned from that day might have done them good for many days to come.

But what did they do after this? Such irony and such logic were alike irresistible; they had recourse to other weapons, to which conscious weakness and want of truth always has recourse. They persecuted him; they cast him out of the synagogue, and said to him, "Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?" These words are extremely expressive, "Altogether born in sin—you were born blind on account of sins; you are blind in soul, and blind in body; and oh, blind man, your mind is even darker than your body, fit for no good, utterly unable to teach us: the best treatment we can give you is to cast you out as a withered branch, not fit to belong to that synagogue over which we preside." Thus, then, they thrust him out; they silenced, though they could not confute; they threw out the man, since they were unable to neutralize and reply to his reasons.

Now, the lesson we learn from the whole of this scene is, that the lineal priests of the Lord lost the spirit and the mind of the Lord. Mark the fact: these men had a true lineal succession from the days of Aaron; there was no flaw in the personal succession of these men; there was not a priest in that sanhedrim who could not trace his lineage right upward to Aaron himself; and yet these men denied the faith, disclaimed the gospel, crucified the Lord of glory. And should not this teach a lesson to others who make similar pretensions in this day? It is possible to succeed the apostles by the most accurate lineal succession, and yet to have lost all the doctrines of the apostles in all we preach and in all we define. It is not true, because a man has apostolic succession, that therefore he preaches apostolic doctrine; but it is true, that he that preaches apostolic doctrine has unquestionably apostolic

succession. It is not true, that he who can trace his genealogy to Paul or Peter, *therefore* must preach truth; but it is true, that the minister who preaches truth, whether he can trace it or not, is a successor of the apostles and an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The next lesson we learn from this is, that our Lord and the apostles received the Old Testament Scriptures from the hands of these very men. Now you know it is an argument of the present day, which Dr. Wiseman, especially, wields on all occasions, and sometimes with effect—that the Protestants received the Bible from the Church of Rome, and that we ought therefore to take the Church of Rome's interpretation of the Bible. The proper reply to this is very obvious. Suppose we received the Bible from the Church of Rome, (which I deny, and can disprove,) it does not follow that we are to take her opinion of its contents. Our Lord and his apostles received the Old Testament from these men in this very synod or sanhedrim of Pharisees, but they repudiated their interpretation of it; they took the book in all its perfection, but they repudiated the interpretation the ecclesiastics of the day put upon it. So with us. If we received the New Testament from the Church of Rome, we accept the document, thankful that God made so unfaithful a guardian convey to us so precious a deposit, regretting that she was so blind while she carried in her hand so bright a lantern; but when she says, "You must take our interpretation," we answer, "We must treat you as the apostles treated the Pharisees and scribes; we will take the document, but we will not see or hear what the pope says about the Bible, but what the Bible says about him." It is our prerogative to read the Bible at first hand; let us never forget that. If there be one truth that our Protestant forefathers sealed with their blood it is this: that I am God's child, and I must hear my Father's grand

voice in the original, and not in words reflected in priestly, and conciliar, and patristic echoes, from generation to generation. When I want to know the truth, I must tell Duns Scotus, Thomas Aquinas, Pio Nono, and Gregory the Sixteenth, all the fathers, councils, and schoolmen, to stand at the bottom of the hill, while, like the patriarch of old, I ascend alone to the sun-lit top, and hold sweet communion with my God and my Saviour's God, with my Father and his Father.

Next, I would notice how calculated are prepossession, and prejudice, and passion to tell on and influence the mind. These men's judgments were warped by their passions; they knew what was true, but their hearts would not let them receive it. Does not this suggest the true spirit of much of the infidelity of the present day? It is not that men need new heads, but new hearts; it is not deficiency of light, but deficiency of love and grace, and divine power in their hearts and consciences. Nobody can determine by any calculus he can use how much the judgment is the scholar of the heart. How frequently do we believe to be true that which our passions or prejudices bid us wish to be true! and how few men are there who, in the cold light of reason, can come to cold conclusions, irrespective and independent of their hearts and passions and feelings. Therefore what we need the Holy Spirit to do is, not to give us new Bibles, but new hearts wherewith to read them; it is not to give us more light, for I say we have far more light and far more evidence that the Bible is true, than any jury in the Old Bailey ever had for the conclusion that a prisoner was guilty; and if the evidence we have for the truth of this book is not sufficient to prove it, innocent men have been sacrificed for the past four or five centuries by the sentences of our judges, and the whole world has proceeded upon a supposition, an imagination, a fancy.

Let us pray, then, that the Spirit of God may give us not new judgments only, or new lights only, though both may be useful, but new hearts, new sympathies, and thus make all things new.

Lastly, let us learn, that if there be no infallibility in popes, there is no infallibility in general councils, in presbyteries, in general assemblies. If we are not to call the pope our master, we must be taught to call no council our master. We must set aside the council as a decisive authority; we may take its reasoning, or its suggestions, or its prescriptions, but we are to bring all that the ablest and the most gifted assert, all that the most venerable council propounds, to the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to it, it is because there is no truth in them. Let us ever remember that the visible church is not always Christ's true church. The visible church in the days of our Lord had been utterly apostate; it has become apostate since. The true church was composed of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, and the rest in that sanhedrim constituted the apostasy. The true church still consists of all the true members of the body of Christ, and all beyond and besides are only portions of the apostasy. At present the tares are mingled with the wheat; the day comes when the tares shall be gathered into bundles, and cast into everlasting fire, and they that are the wheat shall shine forth in the kingdom of their Father, like the stars, for ever and ever. Amen.

## LECTURE XIX.

## THE WITHERED HAND.

And it came to pass, that he went through the corn-fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungry, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathār the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath. And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.—MARK ii. 23-28; iii. 1-6.

BEFORE proceeding to explain the interesting and instructive facts recorded in the passage I have chosen, I may just state that there is, what is very important, another version of this same transaction, differing only in words, though fuller in some portions of the narrative, in Matt. xii. “At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungry, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath

day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law [here is the additional illustration] how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, that in this place [this also is additional] is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him."

We thus perceive that the two narrators of the transaction that occurred on the very same day, were not in any way in communication one with the other, or copyists the one of the other's narrative. We have here (putting altogether out of question, for the moment, that each was inspired) the independent versions of one transaction, as it presented itself to two distinct persons, told each in his own way, and according to the impression made at the

time. We invariably find, when two witnesses are examined before a judge and jury about one transaction which both witnesses saw, that the one will state facts which the other omits, and his testimony will be supplemented by other facts which the other narrates. The reason of this is, that no two men, looking at one occurrence, are equally touched by every incident in that occurrence. One fact strikes one, and makes the deepest impression upon him; another fact strikes the other, and makes the deepest impression upon him; and when each gives his statement of what he saw, he states first and at greatest length the facts that made the deepest impression, and are therefore retained the most in his memory; and thus the judge and jury have the clear evidence that these are two impartial narrators of an actual transaction. Now this is one of the indirect, but quiet proofs, that the evangelists who record the life and transactions of Jesus, were actual witnesses of all they wrote, and that they have given in their narrative the facts as they saw them, guided and governed at the same time by that overshadowing inspiration which guarded them from all error, and guided them to the statement of all that was absolutely necessary, and eternally true.

In looking at this narrative, and the portion with which I have connected it, we see another of those miracles to which I have alluded performed on the Sabbath day. In the Gospels we shall find in all seven miracles performed by our Lord upon successive Sabbath days. The question occurs sometimes to a fair and honest reader of the Bible, Why, when our Lord saw that doing the miracles on the Sabbath day was so detestable to the Pharisee, whether that detestation was real or assumed, did he persist in doing them? The answer is, in the first place, the objects on whom they were wrought came in his path on the Sab-

bath day; and the true question is, therefore, not why should he do them, but why should he not do them? In the next place, superstition had perverted to its own miserable ends that sublime and blessed institution, the Sabbath day. The traditionists had displaced it from its true, holy, and original position, and had placed the Sabbath in the room of the Sabbath's Lord, the ceremonial in the room of the moral, the ritual in the stead of the spiritual; and it needed our Lord, the great purifier of the temple, and the Lord of the Sabbath, to purify and restore his own divine institution to its true, original, and useful position. These are sufficient reasons why Christ wrought these miracles upon the Sabbath day. Few readers of the New Testament can fail to notice that the Pharisees had completely substituted the sanctimonious use of the Sabbath, in the room of moral, humane, and merciful duties; they pleaded its sacredness as a reason why they should not do good; they urged its obligations as sufficient apologies for utterly trampling down the most precious offices; they had inverted the order of things, by placing the means, which was the Sabbath, in the room of the end, which was the improvement of the creature and the glory of God. Hence the Sabbath had come to be an obstruction to religion in the hands of the Pharisees, not an impulse and incentive to it. To perform certain mere ceremonial rites upon their Sabbath was sacredly to observe it: to let a neighbour die by the roadside on that day, to let the poor, the hungry, the starving, the naked, go without food and raiment because it was the Sabbath, was a common and applauded practice with the Pharisees of old.

The previous chapter, which introduces the miracle in the passage I am about to comment on, tells us that the disciples, wearied and hungry, plucked the ears of corn as they passed through the corn-field and by the wayside.

There was no dishonesty in this, because by an express law—and one of those laws that show that the Levitical economy unfolds an estimate of what is due to the poor, and of the best way of treating them, at least not inferior to the best of modern legislation—this act of the disciples was permitted. In Deut. xxiii. it is written, “When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn.” That is, if a hungry man, passing through the corn-fields of Judea, should gather with his hand as much as he could eat, he was welcome to do so, and the proprietor dared not prohibit or disturb him; but he must not bring the sickle, because that would be to cut down the corn, and carry it home, which would have been trespass and actual dishonesty: the Mosaic ritual thus teaching the rich proprietor of the corn-field, that he was not the absolute owner, but the steward, partly for himself, and partly, too, for the wants of the poor. Hence the practice still survives in many countries, of allowing gleaners to go into the field, and gather up all the corn that remains when the proprietor has carried home what he feels to be his own. But modern machinery, I am told, has very much put an end to this ancient usage. It is painful to note a melancholy and yawning chasm too long forming between one and another class of mankind; this is real misfortune—it is ever pregnant with evil; for when such a chasm has reached its maximum depth and breadth, then will come the terrible collision, which ends in revolution, in common ruin, in wide-spread destruction. Let us try to recognise in the poorest a brother, and in all want a claim. Let nations and individuals regard the poor in the land, whom they have always, as substantially and morally entitled to their bounty and beneficence under all circumstances.

Our Lord met the Pharisees, when they made this objection, upon their own ground, and specified two distinct cases where the objection would find its solution without their going beyond their own books for it. The first is the case of David. He and his friends were hungry; they went to the high-priest, and in their hunger partook of the sacramental bread, as I might call it—the shewbread; and yet they did not desecrate the Sabbath or defile the temple, or do an unholy thing, of which they would have been guilty under ordinary circumstances. Necessity has no law. It would have been sin in David to have eaten the shewbread under ordinary circumstances, but when starving for want of food, he and his friends were warranted, in order to escape death by hunger, in eating the sacred bread laid up in the sanctuary of God. So, with reference to the Sabbath, in the words of the admirable Scotch Shorter Catechism, “works of necessity are excepted.” What must be done upon the Sabbath, as the prescription of absolute necessity, it is not desecrating the Sabbath; to do. The Jew still clings in his exile to the ceremonial of his fathers, and though perplexed by the circumstances of his position, he gets over his difficulties thus: he finds there are certain things, in this country for instance, which it is absolutely necessary to do upon the Sabbath; these he will not touch himself, and therefore he gets a Gentile to do them for him; he thus thinks he is escaping the consequence of violating his law by inducing the Gentile to step in and do the sin in his stead, forgetting that it is done in his name, and that upon his shoulders, if there be sin, must rest the responsibility.

In the parallel passage in Matthew, our Lord quotes the case of the priests in the temple, as doing things there which were not strictly sacred, but necessary to enable them to perform their sacred functions. They were ob-

liged to circumcise, to put on and off their robes, and perform divers washings. And again he urges, that if a man has a sheep that has fallen into the ditch, surely he is not to let it perish because it is the Sabbath day. Some persons would argue that he ought not, if he had a sheep or a horse thus in danger, to go and rescue it. I think he ought; it is his duty; it is a "work of mercy." Or were your corn on fire in your field, and it were absolutely plain that it would be consumed in a few hours by a flame that was making its way toward it, it would be your duty to cut it down, even upon the Sabbath day—and that as fast as possible. These last two instances come under the category of works of mercy. We see a work of necessity in David's case, to do which is not to desecrate the Sabbath; and we have a work of mercy in the case of the priests of the temple, and the man's rescuing his sheep, which is also to be done on the Sabbath, and yet the Sabbath is not desecrated thereby. With the exception of these two, works of necessity and of mercy—and every man's conscience, enlightened by God's word, must determine what is a work of necessity, and what is a work of mercy—the Sabbath is to be hallowed, and kept holy to the Lord.

Our Lord thus interposed, and at the same time emitted one of those magnificent thoughts which form great central principles, in the light of which, and in relation to which, all subordinate questions of casuistry may be fairly settled. He says, "You do certain things which are necessary in the temple on the Sabbath day;" and then, anticipating their objection, or rather seeing their objection in their hearts—"Your disciples were not in the temple; they were in the fields, and therefore your illustration is inapplicable"—the Lord instantly says, "One greater than the temple is here." What a sublime sentiment is this! and how much is it in accordance with other passages in

Scripture! such as, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up. He spake of the temple of his body;" and that beautiful passage in the Apocalypse, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, *even* the Lamb, [ζαὶ, even—that is the translation,] is the temple thereof." We see how the moral eclipses the material. The spiritual temple, Christ and his people, are more glorious than the temple on which the Jews prided themselves, and which they quoted as the grand ornament of their country. Christ in the midst of his own constitutes the true, grand, eternal cathedral, for which stone and lime can be no substitute, in the absence of whom we may have a crypt of the dead but not a sanctuary of the living. A crowd we may have without Christ; a church we cannot have except Christ be in the midst of it. Living stones, built upon the living Christ, rise up the eternal and the true temple not made with hands—which the Lord builds, not man.

Then Christ adds this other remark, equally instructive, explaining their objection; "If you had known that, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice'—if you had only known this, you would not have objected to my disciples plucking the ears of corn when they were absolutely hungry. They were priests in the true temple, doing a priestly act, when, in my presence, and in subserviency to me, they satisfied their hunger with ears of corn. Or, to put it on a lower ground, (he says,) if you had only known, I would have mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have thus objected." He thus charges them with ignorance of their own law, and with being unacquainted with that express declaration of the prophet, that God prefers the exercise of mercy to the performance of the most splendid sacrifice. If the ceremonial stand in the way of the moral, let the ceremonial give way, not the moral. The most gorgeous ceremony that

obstructs the vision of the countenance of God should be rent, and torn, and cast away. Let the ceremonial by all means be the vehicle of the moral; but if it interfere with the manifestation of the moral, it is not the moral that is to yield, but the ceremonial. Give, for instance, by all means, the sacrifice of praise to God; but let the praise rise from a heart loaded with adoring gratitude to God. If the question is to be, Shall I have beautiful music and cold hearts, or bad music and warm, and grateful, and glowing ones? there is to be no hesitation—the loving and the praising heart makes sweeter music in the ear of God than timbrels, and cymbals, and trumpets, and organs, and all instruments of pleasing sound. By all means, give the sacrifice of raiment to the naked, of bread to the hungry, of water to the thirsty; but let the hand that gives it be the almoner of the heart within, that overflows with mercy, goodness, and beneficence. Better the heart that would give if it had the power, than the hand that does give without the least connection with the heart, but on some other ground, and for some other end. By all means, let love and liberality, like twins, live together; but part with liberality rather than with love. Be *willing* to give, rather than give from necessity, and from no sympathy with them that need. “So,” says our blessed Lord; “it has been with my disciples. If God loves mercy rather than sacrifice, moral duties rather than ceremonial rites, then my disciples, by their seeming profanation of the Sabbath, have caught its true spirit, and honoured it; and you Pharisees, by your seeming honouring of the Sabbath, have lost its true spirit, and you daily desecrate and destroy it.” I ask, did ever man speak like this man? Did such sentiments as these ever fall from the lips of humanity? And have we not in the very perusal of them the evidence that not the temple,

nor the priest, but the Lord of the temple, and the Creator of the priest, spake here?

Another sentiment he utters one cannot but study, as no less beautiful and true. It casts still more light upon the idea which I am endeavouring to express and teach. "The Sabbath," he says, "was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Here again is another grand maxim. If this sentiment were only kept in the minds of all men clearly, it would be, not a mere aphorism to be quoted to point a speech, or to justify some deviation from what is good; but it would be received as a grand, central, regulating element of thought in all we are, in all we say, and in all we do, with reference to religion. We may adopt this sentiment, for instance, with regard to fasting. Fasting is not an absolute order of God, so that man is to fast as a duty; but it is a prescription of God, which man is to take if his own sensations teach him, and that will help him more truly to think of, and meditate on, God; but which his common sense will tell him he ought not to take, if he find that fasting, instead of enabling him to read and think and meditate, will just have the opposite effect; for fasting was made for the convenience of man, not man for the observance of fasting. So, again, with prayer itself. Prayer is not a duty to be performed, a penance to be done, an expiation to be made; but it is to be the expression of our wants, and the seeking of satisfaction of those wants from God. If any man, therefore, who does not feel wants, prays as a mechanical duty, because God has commanded it, he misses altogether the true end and meaning of prayer. I do not pray because God has commanded me, just as I would give to the poor because God has commanded it; but I pray, as the use of a commanded means in order to obtain a promised end—a blessing. Prayer is not an ultimate duty, to be done because a duty, and so to be done

with; but it is a means toward an ultimate end, and we are not to be satisfied till we reach the end, and cease to use the means. Thus, coming to the house of God is a duty. Nothing is more noble than an audience of intelligent men met to praise the God in whom they live; and to seek blessings from him without whose blessing they cannot live; but if there be a sick one at home that needs your sympathy, a dying one at home that requires your presence, then the duty of going to the sanctuary, which is the ceremonial, yields to the work of necessity and mercy, which is the moral; and you ought to stop at home, and minister to the sick; and attend to the dying. Again, in reference to the communion or the church that you love, whatever it may be, you are to love it, and attach yourselves to it, as means toward an end; but the church that you love the most, without the gospel, must be let go in order to enter another church which you do not prefer, but which has the gospel; because the church is not an end to be attached to as an ultimate thing, but a means, an instrument toward an end, which you are to use till that end be obtained. The sabbath in the soul, the bowing of the knee of the heart, the worship in spirit and in truth—these are greater, because more lasting, than all ceremony. All outward institutions—Sabbaths, prayer, reading, and communion, are but the scaffolding, precious in their place, for without the scaffolding the building cannot be raised; but they are not to be made to supersede the hope of the grand building which is to come, but to be used and honoured till that building be complete, and then the scaffolding shall be taken down. Let the eye be only single, let the inward purpose of the soul be pure, and meek, and true, and all things will fall into their proper place, and assume their true and holy relationship. Then Sabbaths, and sanctuaries, and ceremonies will be wings to the soul, not weights to it; then the Sabbath, and prayer,

and reading will be the foot-prints that show you the way to Jesus, not blinds to the knowledge of him, and superseding him—voices crying in the wilderness, “Behold the Lamb!” not drowning his still small voice—steps and helps to find Jesus, not substitutes for him—in one word, means to an end, and not that end itself.

Our Lord adds another maxim which I cannot but notice also: “For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.” There was present on that Sabbath, not the law, but the Legislator himself; not merely the hallowed Sabbath, but the Fountain out of which its hallowing came. He originally constituted it, he originally hallowed it, and he had power to suspend it, change it, or use it as he pleased, for it existed for him and to him, and it must not be placed in the room of him.

Such then is the scene preliminary to the performance of the miracle recorded in the third chapter of Mark. In order to show these truths in action, our Lord proceeds to heal this man, as the conclusion of this discourse which he had now pronounced. By the most irresistible reason, by exhibiting the purest and noblest sentiments in their own sacred books, by argument as plain as it was conclusive, he showed them it was right and lawful to heal the sick, raise the dead, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, even though it was upon the Sabbath day. When the Pharisees cavilled, and asked, was it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, he puts their question in its true shape; he does not give a direct answer; they put their question in a sophistical shape, but he puts it in its true light, and says, “Is it lawful to do good, or to do evil, on the Sabbath day?” He says, “The real question is not, Is it lawful to *do*, or *not to do*, on the Sabbath? but, Is it lawful to do *good* or *evil*, on the Sabbath?” And that question, by inference, implies that not doing the good

that was presented on the Sabbath day was tantamount to doing evil. We read that when he put the question to them in that light they were silent. He therefore holds no more discussion preliminary to the miracle he performs; he brings his theory into practice, his utterance into action: "Stretch forth thine hand." The man did it, and instantly the withered hand, whatever was the nature of its disease, was made whole, even as the other.

We read that when Jesus was about to do this miracle, (and I refer to it especially because it embodies a very important and precious sentiment,) "he looked (ver 5) round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, and saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other." As we read the first clause, "When he looked round about on them with anger," our best emotions are momentarily checked; we instantly conceive that that beautiful, that calm, that holy bosom, so still, so placid, so self-composed, was ruffled by the emotion of anger. But then when we read what follows, our surprise is instantly removed; for we find that while he looked round with anger, it was "being grieved at the hardness of their hearts." The anger that he felt at the sin resolved itself into pity and compassion toward the men that were guilty of it. We have a parallel case in that beautiful exclamation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killst the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, [the language of indignant accusation; but instantly followed up by] how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"—the language of tender and infinite compassion. Now here is the perfect model, and there is no such model to be found anywhere but in Jesus; here is the model, not for out-

ward conformity, but for inward feeling and emotion, for anger, pity, all that is pure that can actuate the human heart.

We learn from this feeling of our blessed Lord, that the emotion we should feel, when we behold wickedness, crime, and transgression, is not indignation only—for if there be indignation only at the criminal, it prompts to persecution: not compassion only—for if there be compassion only when we see a criminal, it instantly makes us connive at, explain away, or modify the sin: not apathy—for that is stoicism; not the pantheistic acquiescence in evil, as if evil were only “unripe good,” as they call it; nor must there be the philosophic sneering quietism which says, “It is just what you might have expected;” but there must be a holy, a righteous, strong indignation at sin, because it is sin—and that indignation set in the bosom of compassion, revealing by the flash of its purity, how you ought to pity and compassionate the man who is the victim of that transgression. Thus, then, when we see some one guilty of grievous sin—it may be the sin that we are most ready to take notice of, sin against oneself—some one who has wronged, cheated, deceived, maligned, and misrepresented us; when we look at that man, we cannot but feel indignation—and it is very easy to feel so; there is no merit in the world in feeling indignant, for human nature is quick enough to resent the wrongs it feels; but while we thus look at him, we think of him whose spirit we have imbued, and if we be Christians, we must be indignant indeed, but we shall also learn to check the indignation by a deep sense of pity and compassion. No man is so to be pitied as he that sins; he wrongs himself; the great injury he inflicts is not upon me whom he cheats, deceives, and maltreats, but upon himself, and the recollection of his crime, it is pos-

sible, may cleave to his conscience, a corrosive and consuming punishment, for ever and for ever. In that beautiful sermon preached upon the Mount there is no benediction pronounced upon indignant men; but a thousand benedictions upon the merciful, the peaceful, the sin-forgiver, those that pray for them that despitefully use them. With respect to some great criminal from whom is exacted his life, as an offering to the violated laws of his country, if we knew all of that criminal which he knows of himself, we should feel that there was much for holy indignation, but much, very much, for pity, for deep and thrilling compassion. That guilty criminal who surrenders his life upon the scaffold for his crimes, may have been left early an orphan; there may have been no school to snatch him from the streets provided by us, as there ought to have been; he may have been flung into contact with the rest of the offscourings and the degraded of human society; he may have been placed in circumstances of the most trying, most perilous, and most seductive nature; he may have known what it was to want a morsel of bread, and have been driven under strong pangs of hunger to steal; he may have never known what it was to hear a holy advice, or to learn a pure and true lesson: —if we knew all these dread preparatives to the last crime he committed, while we should be indignant at the crime so heinous, we should feel deep compassion for the criminal so guilty. And what should soften our indignation too, when we think of the worst of criminals is this; that criminal is a man; he was nursed upon a mother's knee; he was once tended by a father; he was once loved by his sisters; he remains a man, just as we are, with all the hopes, the emotions, the feelings, the sympathies that we have; but he was left in circumstances and to circum-

stances from which, in the providence of God, we were delivered. Oh! feel indignant at the crime ; but let not tender pity and compassion fail to modify that indignation ; pray for the criminal. And recollect that if you had been equally God-forsaken—if you had been early left an orphan—if you had never been schooled in early years—if no Christian teacher had taught you, and no kind parents had set a beautiful and true example before you ; if no softening and subduing influences had ever reached your heart, you might have been where the criminal now stands, and the criminal might have been where you now are. There is great room for compassion, there is room also for gratitude to God ; and this must subdue and modify mightily the indignation you feel at the great crime of which he has been guilty. If we look around us now, do we not see in the circumstances of the very worst of society much room for pity ? When I think of all the modifying elements that I meet with—when I think of what we might have been, if we had been otherwise placed in the providence of God, and when I think that we deserve nothing of the distinguishing goodness we have enjoyed any more than those who never had it—I must say, I am more and more disposed to pity the guiltiest, and I feel less competent or disposed to sit upon the judgment-throne and pronounce indignant sentences upon any. It is God's high prerogative to pronounce the sentence of condemnation ; it is man's noble function to pity, compassionate, and pray for the criminal. When we look at homes that are miserable—at poverty, nakedness, hunger, starvation, all the accompaniments of many a poor man—we see in them much to excite our compassion ; but are there not more terrible things than these ? If you could look, not at the poverty, the hunger, the nakedness, but into

the man's bosom, and see bruised affections, a bleeding heart, disappointed hopes, bitter disappointments, you would see in that poor man, when driven to some dread crime, much that would make you pity and pray for him, while there is and may be only what would make others justly condemn him. And when I think, above all, of that blessed Lord, whose example I am now quoting, that he had compassion for others, but none for himself—"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children"—when I remember that mercy was the great feeling that consumed him, and that in compassion to our souls, and to us as transgressors, he bowed the heavens, and bare the cross, and despised the shame, I am sure that I show most of his spirit, when I feel far less indignation and far more compassion toward the guiltiest and the worst of mankind. Depend upon it, if we were more ready to compassionate, and less ready to be indignant, we should succeed far more speedily in elevating and improving mankind. I need not bid you be indignant at criminals—that you will be, quickly enough—but the high Christian feeling which we need more and more to entertain and exercise, is that of pity and compassion.

We read that our Lord was surrounded by men—those men whom he thus pitied and was grieved at for the hardness of their hearts—who no sooner saw the miracle than they conspired (the Herodians, or the parties in alliance with Rome, with the Pharisees, or the parties who detested Rome, and longed to be emancipated from its yoke) to destroy Jesus, as they did in condemning him in the last moment of his life: teaching us that all forms of error will co-operate when the truth is to be put down; that internal antagonisms between conflicting systems of error will all be merged and buried in one current, when

God's great truth is to be resisted and banished from the earth.

Let us pray that our views of the Sabbath may be those enlightened ones which Jesus taught—that our feeling toward the criminal may be less indignation and more compassion, such as Jesus showed; and bless God that Christ, who left us a propitiation for the sins of all that believe, has left us also an example, that we may follow in his steps.

## LECTURE XX.

## ELOQUENT NATURE.

And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there. Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.—MATT. xxi. 17-22.

IN the Gospel which contains an account exactly parallel to this, there is one clause added which makes in some degree a distinction, without a real difference, between the two narratives. It is stated in the Gospel by St. Mark, that when Jesus saw the tree, “and came if haply he might find any thing thereon,” “he found nothing but leaves;” and it is added, “for the time of figs was not yet.” This is the only addition given by Mark.

This is the last of the miracles performed by our blessed Lord which I have endeavoured to explain in successive lectures. It differs from the rest in its tone and in its character; it is also beset with some difficulties which lie upon the surface, not however insurmountable; for when we look beneath, we shall find the elements of easy reconciliation, and that the apparent discords are only portions of latent and of real harmony.

The question has been asked—which contains one difficulty in the narrative—“How could Jesus, being omniscient as God, expect to find figs upon a fig-tree which he must have known contained none? The answer is, that we are not to expect in what is partly a parable, (for such this is, as well as a miracle,) that the mere outward facts are historically true, but that they are probably true. In all probability no such history actually occurred as that of the sower who went forth to sow: it was merely an outward probable narrative, that might be true, that occurs every year in every land, and which every one can accept as true, and justly consecrated to be the outward covering of an inner, glorious, and spiritual truth. The historical statement is the scaffolding or the pedestal for sustaining, and making more clear and vivid by the contrast, the great moral and spiritual truth which it was intended to convey. Now, Jesus coming and expecting fruit, and finding none, is so natural, and what we might so truly expect of any man approaching the tree in similar circumstances, that speaking as a man, and acting throughout as the perfect man, he might have expected fruit—it ought to have been; he was hungry—he found nothing to satisfy his hunger: and so it is stated in the narrative before us. We find in parallel passages difficulties as great. It is said that God came down from heaven to see if there were any that did good. Now, it cannot be true that God was ignorant of what was the state of the earth; it cannot mean that God actually changed his locality—omnipresence is everywhere; but it is what can be predicated of a man whose nature is thus ascribed to that God who took upon him our nature,—sin, falsehood, imperfection of character alone excepted. Throughout the Bible we hear God speaking, repenting, promising, beseeching; and thus addressing Jerusalem as if it were impregnable to grace—“How often would I have

gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" All this is divine thought audible in the language of man, great eternal truths clothed with the imperfect drapery of human speech—the accommodation, as it were, of what would be infinite and inconceivable to the finite and imperfect apprehension and comprehension of man. The great idea here meant to be conveyed is, that just as Christ looked for fruit on that fig-tree, and found none, he comes down to earth still, and looks for practical fruits, such as those enumerated in Gal. v. 22, in the conduct of every believer, and there finds them, or finds them not.

The other difficulty that has been adduced as peculiar to this miracle is, that there seems to be expressed an unnatural and almost unnecessary revenge in blasting by a curse the fig-tree, because it had no fruit to satisfy the hunger of Jesus. But this objection originates in a feeling that there is something inconsistent with what we should expect in the character of Jesus when he displayed any thing like anger, or what might bear the likeness of resentment. But in truth it arises from a feeling that nothing like judgment should occur in the dispensations of God—from a secret persuasion that we entertain in the depths of our hearts, that there is nothing in the creature to necessitate punishment, but every thing to draw down approbation, affection, and love. But we do read of Jesus being angry; we read of the love of Christ, we read also of the wrath of the Lamb. In one word, Jesus was man. But we shall see that historically and morally there was a reason for the peculiar manifestation of divine displeasure which is embodied in this miracle. Every miracle that we have before examined has been expressive of unmixed beneficence; now it does seem that there was needed some divine manifestation of justice and of judgment also. Amid so

many and so glorious rays of infinite goodness, it does seem natural that there should be at least seen, if not in all its intensity, one ray of that God who is the consuming fire. Amid so much as we have been considering to draw out love from man's heart, something was wanted to prevent presumption appearing in any man's bosom. And yet, even here, where there is a miracle to teach us that while God overflows with love, he is yet a just God, and angry with the wicked every day—yet even here, and amid such evidence of judgment, there are seen the reflections of goodness and mercy. Mercy is mingled with judgment; for while the subject of healing, in every miracle we have considered, was a man—while the object of the goodness that Jesus displayed was the living and sensitive and rational creature, the monument of his curse is not a rational, sensitive man, but an irrational, insensible, and unconscious tree. Thus we see that when he was teaching how good he was, he made man to be the recipient of that goodness, and the page on which he wrote the lesson; but when he was teaching how holy he was, and how truly he would avenge sin, he made an unconscious tree to be the lesson-book, and the recipient of that judgment: so that in the very midst of his judgment we see mercy; and we are taught by these spectacles more and more that goodness is his every-day delight, and that judgment is his “strange work.”

But it has been asked, in the next place, “Why so treat a tree? Why so treat an unconscious and unoffending tree?” I answer: Christ did not ascribe to the tree responsible or moral qualities; he merely made it the symbol of such responsibility and of such moral qualities. We read, for instance, in the prophet Hosea, a similar image: “I saw your fathers as the first ripe fruit in the fig-tree at her first time.” So in Joel, “He hath laid my vine waste,

and barked my fig-tree : he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away." And in Luke, " He spake also this parable ; a certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard." That is not historically true ; it is merely a probable history used to represent and embody eternal and spiritual truths. All external imagery is perishing, but the inner and spiritual thought for which it was constructed lives for ever. Jesus came, it is said, and sought fruit, but found none. The tree is used as a symbol, and it was blasted to teach man a great moral and spiritual truth. The very fact that it was a thing, and not a man—in other words, the very objection that some make to the blasting of the fig-tree in order to teach a lesson to mankind, is the best and strongest reason why it should be selected for this purpose ; for all nature was made to be subservient to man, nature's lord and king. All things now exist for man's good as well as for man's glory ; and the selection of this tree, even by its sacrifice and destruction, to convey a new lesson to mankind, is an instalment and foreshadow of that glorious epoch when nature shall hear the last trump, and rise from her degradation and her ruin, and become the mighty lesson-book from which a vast and redeemed population shall learn new and glorious lessons of the goodness, and mercy, and beneficence of God.

I may also notice, (and I mention these things because they are historical facts worth recollecting,) that while the vine is used to represent what is beautiful and good, the fig-tree is never or rarely used in the Bible except as the symbol of what seems bad. It is the barren fig-tree we read of ; it is the fig-tree cast down and destroyed. And it is remarkable that the ancient Rabbis of the Jews assert in their traditions that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a fig-tree ; and it is no less remarkable that, among the Greeks, with whom the primeval traditions of Para-

dise seem to have survived, or who gathered them, rather, from the Phœnicians, who brought them from the East, a fig-tree is generally used in a bad sense. A Greek would call a bad man, *συκευός ανήρ*, a fig-tree man. So the word “sycophant”—a flatterer, a man who acts dishonestly—when literally translated, means a man that shows figs: showing how widely this association may spread, and what changes it has outlived, as it still runs through the language of mankind; as if the traditions of the Jewish Rabbis were true, that the fig-tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There can be no absurdity in supposing its being so. It might have been an apple-tree, a pear-tree, or an orange-tree, or a bramble; the gist of the appointment was not in what the tree was, but in what it was the symbol of; its representative character was the reality. God appointed the tree simply as a test—a visible test, to show man that he was a creature owing allegiance to his Creator, and that the instant he did what his Creator forbade, that moment he assumed to be his God, and gave up the lowly position of a dependent creature, and wickedly attempted the sovereignty of the independent God.

But the greatest difficulty that has been felt in the interpretation of the miracle, and of the statements that immediately precede it, arises from the clause inserted in the account of St. Mark, that “the time of figs was not yet.” An objection has been raised on this by those who search the Bible for reasons for rejecting it, as has been done by Strauss; for he is the only infidel who seems to have really read the Bible. Paine, Voltaire, Hume, and those men who made jokes at the expense of the Bible, but really at their own expense, acknowledged that they had never read it: the one party had only gathered fragments of it from the missals and breviaries of Rome, and the other party only fragments of it at second-hand, and from not the most

faithful recorders. But Strauss, who has appeared in Germany, and who, I may state, has been thoroughly exposed—alike his sophisms and absurdities—by very able German and American theologians, is one of those who have read the New Testament in search of reasons for rejecting it, just as Zoilus of old read Homer, looking only for errors and inconsistencies. And no doubt, if a man set about such a work, his diseased imagination, sustained by an unregenerate heart, will be very likely to discover difficulties and objections where none really exist. His objection is—that it is a most unreasonable and absurd thing to suppose that our Lord should expect figs, when his own evangelist expressly declares that the time for figs was not yet come. What should we think of that man who should go into the fields looking for ripe wheat in the season of spring, or for ripe apples in the month of March? We should say, he must either be ignorant or bent on mischief. Then how can we justify, or how can we solve the apparent difficulty of our Lord expecting in the month of March, which was the month when this miracle was wrought, to find figs, when we are expressly told “the time of figs was not yet?” I think the explanation is perfectly satisfactory. In the month of March, at that early season of the year, it is true there were neither leaves nor figs to be expected on a fig-tree; but it is matter of historical record in the page of the evangelist, that this fig-tree did put forth leaves. I have seen buds in the month of January; and in the premature warmth of the earliest moment of spring, you may see a stray leaf that starts out only to be nipped and destroyed. Now this tree in the month of March seems to have had leaves. But you say, “This does not justify expecting fruit.” It does: a fig-tree bears its fruit before it shows its leaves; and the fact that this tree had put forth leaves was a silent proclamation that it had fruit, and

that if anybody would search for the fruit he would be sure to find it. In other words, the fig-tree gave sign of fruit, while it had not the reality. Seeing leaves, the traveller would naturally look for fruit; but when, hungry and way-worn, he beat the branches of the tree, in order to find the fruit, the narrative is that he found none. It invited the passer-by, by its leaves, to come and find fruit; it disappointed him the moment he made the search. It was like a sign-board hung out over an empty house, proclaiming that there were good things within, whereat the traveller enters, and finds only desolation, cold, and misery. It was not the sin of the tree, if you will allow the expression, that it had no fruit, but it was its sin that it put forth leaves, pretending to have fruit, when it really had none at all. Therefore the miracle, instead of being historically and physically unnatural, is perfectly natural. There is no charge, I repeat, against the tree that it had no fruit, but the real gravamen of the charge lies in this—that while it pretended to have fruit, it not only had none, but it gave the hungry and weary traveller the trouble of searching.

We, brethren, are represented in Scripture as trees of some kind. We read of two classes of trees—trees of righteousness that bear fruit, and the trees that bear none. Like trees, we need to be planted in a congenial soil; like trees, we need a divine breath to pass over us, in order to make us blossom and bear fruit. The spring, and the summer, and the autumn have successively passed over us; have they left upon us the traces that they have not passed in vain? Is our spring come? Do we bear fruit? Are we barren trees, cumberers of the ground, or fruitful trees, giving glory to God, and distributing blessings among mankind? The spring, in the natural world, is the great miracle of nature—it is the annual blossoming of Aaron's rod. If the spring came but once in a lifetime, how should

we wonder at it! or if it came amid all the pomp and procession of thunder, and lightning, and noise, how should we be struck by it! But it does not so: it comes silently and softly, but with irresistible power; and alas, we take little note and feel few thanks. The cessation of spring would be the miracle to us now, not its continuation. The soul needs a spring—the day-spring from on high—just as much as the trees of the wood; and when the soul is acted on by the Spirit of all life, it moves away from its cheerless and wintry aspect, it turns near to the sun, clothes its wintry branches with life, and fruit, and blossom, and constitutes itself by the grace of God a fruitful tree, the planting of the Lord.

But the real relation, I believe, of the miracle, and the narrative which precedes it, is not so much individual, as national. I believe the Jewish nation is the race of which the fig-tree was the symbol, and whose fate was foreshadowed by its destruction. The Gentiles made no profession of religion—they made no pretension to it at all. The Gentiles were the naked stems that spread their skeleton branches in the frosty and biting winds, with neither life, nor bud, nor promise of fruit or blossom; they did not pretend to have any thing. But the Jews professed to bear the choicest fruit; they were clothed with the leaves of profession; they bare even the blossoms that indicated the approach and the advent of fruit; they were righteous, as they thought themselves; they treated with supercilious contempt all the nations of the world besides; they professed to have a righteousness so great that it was adequate to justify them; and they declared that the Gentiles had sunk into a degradation so complete that they were not fit to communicate with them, or even, in any degree, to be admitted to the participation of their peculiar advantages. Our Lord wished to teach them this lesson—that the Jew,

with his blossoms without fruit, was nearer cursing than the Gentile, who had neither leaf, nor blossom, nor fruit; because the first had great advantages, and only great hypocrisy as the result of them; while the last had great disadvantages, no pretension, and little else might reasonably be expected from them. It is therefore in such words as these that this miracle is described by the apostle Paul, when he said, "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law." These are the blossoms—these are the leaves upon the fig-tree; but then, mark the evidence that there was no fruit: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision [that is, the Gentiles] keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee [the Jew, that is] who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?" We have the very same idea carried out in explanatory language in the tenth chapter, where the apostle says, "For they [the Jews]

being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." "To Israel he saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear,) unto this day. And David said, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway." Now, in all these words used by the apostle, in his address to the Roman Christians, we have the exposition, in clear and common words, of the great idea which is embodied in the semi-parable, semi-miracle on which I am now commenting. He shows that the Jews had all the temporal advantages a nation could possibly enjoy, that they had great moral and spiritual privileges, such as no nation on earth had ever reached before, that they shot forth in all directions the green and promising leaves of a large and rich profession. They professed to be something—to be exalted above and distinguished from the rest of the nations of the earth, and therefore something was to be expected from them; but when the great Lord of the vineyard came, and saw the leaves, and began to search for fruit, you might expect that if the Gentiles were left, the Jew should be cursed, and that the blasting of the fig-tree was no less merited than it was natural to that guilty and ungrateful nation. And have we not in the existence of the Jew in our land irresistible and awful evidence of the blasted fig-tree? What is all Palestine but God's fig-tree, in the language of Hosea, "barked and laid low?" What is the Jewish nation in

every part of the world, but the withered and blasted branches of the once fruitful, the now scarcely professing fig-tree? Palestine itself at this moment seems almost overspread by the curse. Its cities are the cities of the dead; its every acre is covered with the tombs of departed ages: it has a soil fit to grow corn that would positively crowd and overflow all the granaries of the world, but it cannot provide corn enough to feed its miserable, its starved, and wretched peasantry. At this very moment there is no Mount Nebo, or Mount Pisgah, from which a successor of Moses can see a goodly land overflowing with milk and honey. On every part of that land the iron hoof of the Arab steed and the naked foot of the Papal monk have trod in succession, and warred for supremacy. In rapid succession, the Roman, the Persian, the Arab, the Turk, the robber, have taken possession of Palestine, and the poor Jew—the fig-tree, blasted, deservedly blasted—has a home anywhere and everywhere, but least a home is his own home; has possessions everywhere, but none in that land which is his by title-deeds more lasting than those of the aristocracy of England. His title-deeds are in Ezekiel, in Jeremiah, in Isaiah, in the Psalms, and must last and live for ever and ever. You have then in the Jew, wherever you find him, a blasted fig-tree, a miracle-stricken nation, a people scathed by a curse that cleaves to them and consumes them, the people of the weary foot, the exiles of the earth, in it and not of it; as if their very existence was a symbol of what God's people should be—in the world, and not of the world.

But there is yet more in this curse. I have noticed the interesting fact, that when Christ is teaching how beneficent he is, he makes man the lesson-book; but when he is teaching how holy and just he is, and how offended he is with sin, he makes a dead tree the lesson-book. But even

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"This is the best book of the kind we have ever examined, and one of the best translations from German into English we have ever seen. The author makes no parade of learning in his book, but his exegetical statements are evidently founded on the most careful, thorough, and extensive study, and can generally be relied upon as among the best results, the most surely ascertained conclusions of modern philological investigation. We by no means hold ourselves responsible for every sentiment in the book, but we cordially recommend it to every minister, to every Sunday school teacher, to every parent, and to every intelligent layman, as a safe and exceedingly instructive guide, through the entire Bible history, the Old Testament and the New. It is a book which actually accomplishes more than its title promises," &c. &c.—*(Andover) Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1855.

Notices by the Press of Kurtz's Sacred History,  
PUBLISHED BY LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON, PHILADELPHIA.

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Dr. J. H. Kurtz's Manual of Sacred History is the production of a very able and pious divine of our church in Europe. The author is particularly distinguished for his learning, his orthodoxy, his liberality, his piety, and his originality. He writes with great clearness and condensation, and presents in a brief compass a large amount of matter. His various works, and particularly his Histories, have received the highest endorsement abroad in their popularity and multiplied editions, and are commended in the strongest terms by the most eminent divines. Guericke, Bruno Lindner, and Rudelbach, laud his Histories in the strongest terms, and the Evangelical Review,\* in the United States, has furnished evidence of his great merits from authentic sources. The admirable Manual of Sacred History, translated by Dr. Schaeffer, (and, having examined some parts of the translation, we may say well translated,) will constitute a rich contribution to our theological literature. Having encouraged the translator to undertake the work, we are the more free to express our high opinion of it, and the fidelity with which it has been executed. We hope this will be the forerunner of other translations of works of the author.

C. P. KRAUTH,

Professor of Sac. Phil. Church Hist. and Past. Theol.. Gettysburg, Pa.

Sept. 16, 1854.

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The *Sacred History* of Dr. J. H. Kurtz, does not belong to the ordinary class of historic Manuals, with which the literature of Germany abounds. On the contrary, after considerable acquaintance with it, we hesitate not to pronounce it a production of very superior merit in its department, possessed of high literary and theological excellence. Its style is pure and perspicuous, its divisions are natural and appropriate, and the grouping of events felicitous and impressive. Without assenting to every sentiment of the author, we cordially recommend his work to the patronage of the Christian public, and consider Dr Schaeffer as entitled to the gratitude of the church, for presenting this Manual to the English public in so accurate and excellent a translation.

S. S. SCHMUCKER,

Professor of Didactic, Polemic and Homiletic Theology, in Theol. Sem. of Gettysburg.

Sept. 17, 1854.

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I know of no work in the English or German language which gives, in so short a compass, so full and clear an account of the gradual development of the divine plan of salvation, from the fall of man to the resurrection of Christ and the founding of the apostolic church, and which is, at the same time, so sound in sentiment, so evangelical in tone, and, without being superficial, so well adapted for popular use, as the "Manual of Sacred History," by Dr. J. H. Kurtz. The translation of the Rev. Dr. Charles F. Schaeffer seems to me, as far as I have examined it, to do full justice to the German original, as well as to the English idiom.

PHILIP SCHAFF,  
Prof. of Ch. Hist., &c.

Mercersburg, Pa., Jan. 31, 1855.

\* July, 1853, p. 138.

Notices by the Press of Kurtz's Sacred History,  
PUBLISHED BY LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON, PHILADELPHIA.

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“\* \* \* \* It would seem that the author of this work is one of that class of individuals on whom God has bestowed ten talents. \* \* \* \* The author is a methodical thinker; he narrates in the most beautiful language and in great clearness, though in a condensed form. \* \* \* \* The translator has placed in the sacred historical library a work of rare merit.”—*Easton Whig*, of Jan. 17, 1855.

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“The author's remarkable genius and vast attainments have already given him a place among the greatest lights in theology and history on the continent of Europe. The present work \* \* \* requires to be thoroughly examined in order to a full appreciation of its highly evangelical type, of its lucid arrangement, of its felicitous selection of historical events, of the harmony of the various parts, and the bearing of the whole upon one glorious consummation. \* \* \* There are few minds, if any, that have thought so extensively or so profoundly on the subjects of which it treats, that they may not be instructed by it. Dr. Schaeffer has performed his work as translator in a manner that fully satisfies those who are most competent to judge of the merits of the translation.”—*Albany Argus*, of Jan. 24, 1855.

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“We cannot but regard this work as a valuable aid to our own students and instructors, from its clear and pregnant summary of facts, its lively and original suggestions, and its constant exhibition of unity in all God's plans and dispensations, of which even the most pious and attentive readers of the Bible are too much accustomed to lose sight.

“This book is, according to the Lutheran standard, thoroughly orthodox in matters of doctrine, and is more thoroughly religious in spirit than any similar German work with which we are acquainted.

“The English translation is, in our opinion, highly creditable to its author; not only accurate, so far as we have yet had time to judge it, but less disfigured by undue adherence to German idiom, by awkward stiffness, and by weak verbosity, than any version we have recently examined.”—*Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, of Jan. 1855.

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“It is a work of great value, not only on account of its literary excellence, and the profound theological knowledge displayed in it, but especially as supplying a great want in a clear, simple, and thorough explanation of all the difficult points and obscure questions both as to doctrine and ecclesiastical polity in the Bible.

“All who are desirous of a thorough understanding of Bible history should possess themselves of this learned and interesting work.”—*Eastonian*, of Jan. 27, 1855.

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"This volume deserves to be in every family; all may read and study it with profit. It is well adapted for schools and seminaries of learning and theology. \* \* We are pleased to learn that arrangements have been already made for its immediate introduction into Esther Female Institute and Capital University. We know of no work in any language, in all the bounds of sacred literature, calculated to exert a more wholesome and beneficial influence in the cause of Christ, than this work."—*Lutheran Standard*, (Columbus, O.) of Jan. 26, 1855.

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